THE LAND OF THE INCARNATION

GERTRUDE HOLLIS

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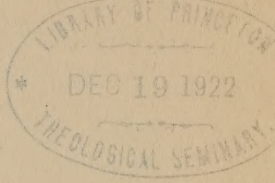

BY

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Contents

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Introduction	7
II.	Before the Exodus	16
III.	The Exodus and the Conquest of Canaan	27
IV.	The Judges and the First King ...	40
V.	The Reigns of David and Solomon	53
VI.	The Kingdom of Israel	65
VII.	The Kingdom of Judah	76
VIII.	From the Captivity to the Maccabees	89
IX.	The Maccabean Wars	103
X.	The Roman Rulers	117
XI.	The Destruction of Jerusalem ...	130
XII.	The Persian and Mohammedan Conquests	143
XIII.	The Latin Kingdom and the Crusades	157
XIV.	Since the Crusades	171
XV.	The Geography of the Holy Land	180
XVI.	The People of Palestine	193
XVII.	Trees and Flowers	205

Contents

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVIII.	Animals and Birds	218
XIX.	Reptiles and Insects	231
XX.	Manners and Customs	243
XXI.	Religious Life in Palestine ...	255
XXII.	Modern Jewish Life	268
XXIII.	The Holy Places	277

CHAPTER I

Introduction

If you walk about the streets of most towns in this country, all the people you will meet will probably be British, except perhaps in the sea-coast towns. If you walk along David Street or Christian Street in Jerusalem, you will probably meet people from all the continents, and from many of the lands in them, in a few minutes. In a few steps you may see fair white, dark brown, olive-hued, and jet-black faces; you may see all kinds of costumes; you may hear perhaps a score of different languages.

To all of them, the Holy Land means something different from any other country in the world. They are not all Christians; many are Mohammedans; some are Jews, and yet to them all it is the "Holy" Land. It is quite possible often to see men and women crying tears of joy because their feet are on the sacred soil, or because some holy thought of the great events that have happened there has come into their hearts.

To Christians especially Palestine can never be like any other country in the world, for it is the Land of the Incarnation. For thirty-three years the Eternal Son of God lived the Life of a Palestine peasant ; He walked about its fields and roads ; He loved it with a true Man's love for His own country ; its people were His people ; its religion was His religion ; there He worked as a village carpenter and a wandering preacher ; in its ground He was buried ; in one of its gardens He rose again, and from one of its hills He ascended to Heaven, and there His Church was founded. It is not strange that the Holy Land is of such unspeakable interest to all who profess and call themselves Christians ; it is right that it should be so. The more we learn about Palestine, its places and its people, the better we shall realise what our Lord's earthly Life was like, and the more clearly we shall understand the Scriptures that were written for our learning.

England to-day is very different from England a thousand years ago, but a thousand years in the Holy Land make hardly any difference, because change is so very slow in the East. This is one of the reasons why Palestine is so fascinating, and why it interests us so deeply. The life there is so very much what it was, not only when

our Lord lived there, but for many hundreds of years before His time.

Apart, too, from its sacred associations, it is different from all other lands. Though it is only about the size of Wales, it has almost all climates in it, and the animal and vegetable life belonging to those climates. The lowest inhabited ground in the world is in Palestine, and the strangest of lakes. Some of its fishes and reptiles are found nowhere else in the world. In one of its lakes the fish are in such myriads that the surface of the water is often brown from their bodies ; in another no living thing can exist. Tropical jungle full of wild beasts ; desert sands ; cold mountain lands ; and the pastures and woods of temperate countries may all be found within a few miles of each other. The country is the most gorgeous mass of flowers one month, and perhaps a dreary, burnt-up scene of desolation the next.

The history of Palestine and its people is as fascinating as the country itself, for no other land has history like it. Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Saracens, Tartars, English, French, Germans, and many others have fought on its soil. The most famous soldiers of the world—Judas Maccabeus, Vespasian, Alexander the Great, Saladin, Napoleon—all come into its history.

The most wonderful of all societies was founded in Palestine ; the most sacred of all books belongs to it. From its poets the whole Christian world learnt how to sing the praise of God ; to its writers the whole Christian world owes the written record of the Love of God.

First, then, because it is the land of the Incarnation, and then for all these other reasons, we want to know all we can about the Holy Land. Through all the centuries the wish to know about it has been strong in Christian hearts and minds. Even in very early times, especially during the crusades, some of the pilgrims who went there wrote accounts of their travels for the people at home. They tell many things about the country which travellers notice to-day. An Englishman named Geoffrey, who went with Richard Coeur de Lion in the 3rd Crusade, and a Frenchman named Joinville, one of the French knights in the 7th Crusade, wrote delightful histories when they came home, which we can read for ourselves. Geoffrey tells of the mosquitoes, which he calls "cincenelles" and how "their stings were followed by burning and swelling, and those who were stung looked like lepers" ; he describes the "rains" in the winter, and how in summer "not a drop of drinkable water could be found within two miles of Jerusalem."

About the year 1350, an English traveller named Sir John Mandeville wrote an account of Palestine " in the name of God, glorious and Almighty," which was so popular that it was translated into many languages. We have no less than thirty copies of his book in the British Museum, in English, French, Latin, German, and Irish.

Numbers of books have been written about the Holy Land, its history ; the people who lived in it in olden times and who live in it now ; their manners and customs ; the animals, birds, and flowers of the country, and everything else that is interesting. Any good library has several of these books, and Christian people ought to read them. It is very helpful also to hear lectures on Palestine given by people who know it well, and to see missionary exhibitions.

In the year 1867 a Society was formed in England for the purpose of studying the Holy Land and making it better known. This is the " Palestine Exploration Fund." It keeps men out in the country making maps and surveying, digging in buried cities, collecting coins, pottery, seals, inscriptions, and other objects ; studying the people, the customs, the animals, and the plants. Many most interesting discoveries have been made by them, and by other clever explorers, some of which we shall think about in this book, and

there is no doubt that much more will be known in the years to come.

A great deal of the history of Palestine is buried in its soil. There are huge mounds of soil and sand, known as "Tels," which have gradually drifted through several thousands of years over cities. When excavations are made in them, the cities are discovered just as they were all those ages ago. At the place called Lachish in the Bible, now known as Tel el-Hesy, remains of no less than eleven cities have been found in the mound. The oldest, which of course is the lowest, must have had people living in it about 1700 years before our Lord was born, and the latest was inhabited about 400 B.C.

You can easily understand how much these buried cities can tell us about the Holy Land in ancient days. Some of the Tels cover remains far older than those at Lachish. At Gezer, a place between Jaffa and Jerusalem, they go back to what is called the "Stone age," when men made their weapons of stone, long ages before Abraham went to Canaan. These weapons are called "flints" and thousands of them have been found in Palestine. Later on, men made bronze weapons and implements, but up to the present Lachish is the only place where these have been found.

The explorers dig up pottery, wine jars, weapons, seals, clay tablets with inscriptions upon them, and many other things, all of which tell the history of the times in which they were made, and the manners and customs of the people who used them. Not many years ago, the explorers who were excavating a buried city, not in Palestine but in Babylon, found the schoolbooks used by children several thousand years ago. They were clay tablets, on which, while they were soft, the lessons were written, and then they were dried in the hot sunshine.

What do we want to learn about the Holy Land first ? Surely its history, which goes back to times long before the Bible was written. Our own country has only about two thousand years of recorded history: very little is known about England before it was conquered by the Romans, except that it possessed rich tin mines and was called Albion because of the chalk cliffs on the south coast. Greater knowledge of the Stone, Bronze, and Celtic Ages may tell us more in the future.

It is very different with the Holy Land: there had been long ages of history there before the time of Julius Caesar.

If you look in your reference Bible at the first page of the Book of Genesis, you will

see in the margin that the date of the Creation of the world is given as " Before CHRIST 4004."
The last page has the date :—" Anno DOMINI 96."

The Bible dates were drawn up by an Archbishop of Armagh in Ireland, named Ussher, who was born in Queen Elizabeth's reign and is buried in Westminster Abbey. He was a great student of sacred history, and his dates were then believed to be as nearly correct as possible and were printed in the Authorised Version of the Bible.

The Jews believe that the world was created in the year 3750 B.C., and the Mohammedans say 5509 B.C.

We know now that none of these dates for the creation of the world are anything like the truth ; that it is millions of years older than any of them ; and that it was in existence for long ages before human life was possible upon it. Human life, too, began long before those dates. Egypt and Babylon and Assyria were highly civilised nations perhaps 6,000 or even more years before Christ.

Only a few years ago, a flint knife was found in Egypt, which scholars say must have been made at least 6,500 years before

Christ. It has a beautifully carved ivory handle, showing a hero fighting two lions. There is a mummy now in the British Museum, also found in Egypt a few years ago, which was a living man before any known history, perhaps 8,000 years before Christ. We have an account of some pomatum made for an Egyptian queen whose husband was king in 4356 B.C., and many vases with inscriptions on them have been dug up in Babylon that were written before 4500 B.C.

All these things have been discovered by the explorers who are digging in the eastern mounds, so you can see how important such work must be, and how much more we may learn as years go on. The oldest references to the history of the Holy Land have been found, not in the country itself, but in Egypt and Babylon, so we must begin our study there.

CHAPTER II

Before the Exodus

We want to know something about the very earliest history of the Holy Land, who the people were who lived in it, and what their life was like. How shall we find out? Perhaps you will think that the Bible will tell us all we want to know, because it begins with the story of the Creation of the world, and that therefore it must be the oldest book in the world. This is quite a mistake. There are many books in existence which were written nearly two thousand years before any part of the Bible as we have it now. An Egyptian book called the "Book of the Dead," many copies of which have been found wrapped up with mummies, was written about 2,500 years before our Lord was born, and there are two stories of adventure called "The Castaway" and "The Two Brothers" which are far older than the Bible, beside very many others.

The Book of Genesis which tells us the earliest history in the Bible is made up of several other books mixed up together. Scholars tell us that some of these were written in the 9th and 8th centuries before

Jesus Christ was born, and others even later than that. Before they were written the early history of the Holy Land and its people was handed down by story-tellers, in tales, and legends, and songs, many of which were afterwards used in the Bible books.

Have we, then, anything older than the Bible to tell us the early history of the Holy Land? Yes, many and most interesting things. We must go to Mesopotamia, especially to Babylon and Assyria, and also to Egypt, because those countries were civilised long before Palestine. Their people learned to write ages before the Hebrew Scriptures were written, and they had much to do with Palestine long before the people we call the Hebrews or Israelites or Jews went there.

At first these nations cut their histories in rough kinds of pictures on the rocks. These pictures grew more and more like letters as time went on, until they became what are called "cuneiform" characters. The word means "a wedge" because they were shaped like a wedge. Of course, there was no such thing as paper in those early days. They wrote on wet clay, afterwards baked in the sun or in furnaces, or carved in stone and marble. As we have already seen, many of their writings are still in existence, and have been found by explorers. A few years

ago, a library containing 32,000 clay books was found in Babylon. The tablets were on the shelves just where they had been left about 2700 B.C., nearly 5,000 years ago. The Assyrians and Babylonians wrote their letters on clay, and made clay envelopes for them, some of which we have in the British Museum.

We have some bricks with cuneiform writing on them which were made at a town in Babylon called Ur, about 2400 B.C. About that time, two sheiks of wandering tribes, who were uncle and nephew, left Ur, with hundreds of servants and slaves, and enormous flocks of cattle, camels, and asses, wandering southward until they came into the land of Canaan. They were Abraham and Lot. Before their time we knew nothing of the Holy Land. The scenes of the stories in the Bible before them belong to Mesopotamia.

The people in Babylon had much the same ideas about the Creation of the world, the coming of sin into the world, and the Flood, that we find in the Bible. Explorers have found them written on clay tablets and cylinders which have been dug up in various parts. Some of those which tell the story of Creation, and some famous "Deluge" tablets, were discovered at Nineveh, and are now in the British Museum. These tablets were written perhaps, as early as the time of Abraham, long before the traditions were

put into the writings from which the Bible accounts are taken.

About the time when Abraham came to Canaan, a king was reigning in Babylon named Khammurabi. We have some of his letters and the laws by which he governed Babylon, which are very like what the Bible says were afterwards taught to the Israelites by Moses. They are carved upon an upright tablet of hard rock called a "stele," which was found at Susa in Persia not very many years ago.

In the 14th chapter of the book of Genesis, you will find an account of a battle fought in Canaan near the Dead Sea between four kings from Babylon and five of the kings in Canaan. The first of the Babylon kings is called "Amraphel," and most scholars believe that Amraphel and Khammurabi are the same man. When the battle was fought, Abraham was living at Hebron, a place about twenty miles from Jerusalem. The noblest oak tree in Palestine grows now at the place where tradition says his camp was fixed, but it is slowly dying.

We know very little about the people who were living in Canaan before Abraham's time, but a great deal more may yet be discovered. They are sometimes called "Canaanites," and sometimes "Amorites," and have been thought to be descendents of Shem.

If you ever go by train from Jaffa to Jerusalem you will pass near the place called Gezer where the Palestine Exploration Society has made wonderful excavations in the cities buried one above another. They have found that there were people living in caves even before the Canaanites, at least 2,000 to 3,000 years before Christ. They made rough pottery, and had weapons carved from flint stones, and needles and pins formed out of animals' bones.

Above these cave-dwellers' relics the explorers have found the burial-places of the Amorites or Canaanites. Seals, pottery, and skeletons, a mould for jewellery and an incense-burner, were found in them. In many of the ancient wall-paintings in Egypt there are pictures of Amorites, which show that they were tall, white-skinned, blue-eyed people. They used to bury little children under the foundations of walls and thresholds, and many jars with babies' bodies in them have been dug up at Gezer, and also at Jericho.

Scholars are now trying to learn more about the people called in the Bible "Hittites." They came to Babylon in very early days and later they were in Canaan. Many rock-carvings, and inscriptions belonging to them have been found in different places, from which we know that they wore

their hair in pig-tails, and had curious tall hats and turned-up shoes. Scholars have not yet succeeded in reading many of their inscriptions, so we may know a great deal more about them in the years to come than we do now. At present, it is not certain whether there were any of them in Canaan at the time of Abraham, though some scholars think so; we only *know* that they were there several hundred years later on.

According to the Bible account Abraham lived in friendly company with the people of Canaan. When his wife Sarai died at Hebron he bought a piece of ground from them for a burial-place, which had a cave in it. There is a Mohammedan mosque at Hebron now, once a Christian Church, which is said to be built over that cave. It is one of the most sacred places to Mohammedans; before the Great War hardly any Christians had seen the tombs inside, but they have now been photographed. The Sultan allowed King Edward VII. to go in when he was Prince of Wales. Christians may only go up as far as the seventh step at the entrance.

Sometimes, excavators who are digging in places where people lived during the three or four centuries following the time of Abraham find Egyptian "scarabs," that is, imitation beetles. Some have names engraved upon them which tell the time at

which they were made, so we know that the Egyptians must have been in the habit of coming to Canaan. Egypt was perhaps the most powerful empire in the world, and after a time the Egyptians conquered Canaan altogether. When that happened we come to a very interesting time. The principal conquerors were Tahutmes the Third and Amenhotep the Third, who reigned over Egypt between 1530 and 1420 years before Christ. Many of the wonderful temples and sphinxes and statues still to be seen in Egypt belong to their reigns and have inscriptions on them telling of their conquests. There are also many writings on papyrus, the material made from a waterplant which was used in ancient days before either parchment or paper. Papyrus grows thickly round Lake Huleh in Palestine now, and the Arabs use it to make mats and baskets and to thatch their huts. You can see some of the old writings belonging to the times of these Egyptian kings in our own British Museum.

Of course you will remember the Bible stories of Jacob and his twelve sons, especially Joseph, the youngest but one. Even children know the history of his brothers' jealousy, and how he was sold as a slave boy to some spice merchants, and taken into Egypt, where he became a very great and powerful ruler, and was able to help his relations in

Palestine during a great famine. History outside the Bible does not tell us very much about all those things, and the Bible itself never mentions the name of the Pharaoh who made Joseph so important. Some scholars think now that the names of Jacob's sons mean different tribes who were settled in Canaan, but perhaps a great deal more may yet be discovered. As the Pharaoh's name is never mentioned we cannot tell yet when these Children of Israel, as the Bible calls them, went into Egypt, but it was some time during the centuries before Canaan was conquered by the Egyptians, perhaps about 1730 B.C.

According to the Bible history there were seventy "souls" who went to Egypt, but if the names mean tribes, there may have been a much larger number. While they were in Egypt a Pharaoh named Amenhotep IV. had his palace at a place called Tel-el-Amarna.

About thirty years ago three hundred baked clay tablets, with cuneiform letters on them, were accidentally discovered at Tel-el-Amarna. A dealer in curiosities bought them and tried to sell them, but no one believed that they were really old, so he packed them all roughly into a sack and carried them on a donkey's back to Thebes on the Nile. Many were broken, but happily

they came into the hands of scholars who knew how priceless they really were. They turned out to be letters written to Amenhotep IV. and his father from all kinds of people in the lands that were subject to Egypt. Some were about the marriage of princesses; some were business letters; others were friendly letters sent with presents. The most interesting of all, however, are letters that were written in Canaan, by the governors of several cities, and by the king of "Urusalim" or Jerusalem.

This king's name was Abdi-Khiba. He writes to ask Amenhotep to send soldiers to help him against tribes of people called Khabiri, who were attacking the country. One of his letters begins, "At the feet of my lord, twice seven times and thrice seven times, I fall." The governor of Gezer and the other writers tell the Pharaoh the same story, and one letter is written by a Canaanite lady. The enemies who were attacking them were tribes which had come down the country from Babylon. They were the people called in the Bible Moabites and Amorites, and were probably related to the Israelites.

Amenhotep was something like our King Henry the Sixth, more monk than king. He was so busy with the worship of the sun-god that he neglected military matters, and before the end of his reign, Canaan was almost lost

to Egypt. The letters that tell all this are written in the Babylonian language, but some of the writers put in the Canaanite words to explain their meaning. Amenhotep's wife was named Teie ; her seal was found at Lachish.

After his death six other Pharaohs reigned, and then we come to a most famous Egyptian king, Ramesses the Great, who reigned for 67 years and left his buildings all over Egypt. He was a great soldier and in his reign Palestine became subject to Egypt again. Most scholars believe that he was the Pharaoh who treated the Israelites with such cruelty, as the book of the Exodus records. Perhaps it was his wars in Syria and Palestine that made him fear the Israelite in his own land.

They had been in Egypt for about 400 years and had become very numerous. We know very little about them during those years, for no mention of them has yet been found either in inscriptions or in documents. This is one of the things explorers and scholars are most anxious to find in Egypt ; perhaps some day they may discover it.

We come now to one of the most wonderful of all the discoveries that have to do with ancient history. It is more than 3,000 years since King Ramesses was reigning in Egypt, and the Israelites were living in his country, and yet we can see and touch his actual

body ! Less than forty years ago, in a buried chamber approached by a deep pit and long corridors under the desert sand, the embalmed bodies of some of the most famous Pharaohs were found. Amongst them were the conqueror Tahutmes III. and Ramesses the Great.

The bodies were in great stone coffins, some of which took sixteen men to lift. The names were written on the coffins, and there were inscriptions telling about their funerals. A king's name is always in a kind of oval figure called a cartouche. It took 48 hours' incessant work to get these royal mummies out, and then they were carefully taken down the Nile in a steamer to the great Museum at Cairo, where they are still. It is strange indeed to realise that we can see the man to whom Moses talked 3,000 years ago.

Ramesses was succeeded by his son Meneptah, and it was probably in his reign that Moses led the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan, but this is not yet quite certain. We shall think about the " Exodus," which means " the way out," in the next chapter.

The people who live fifty years from now will almost certainly know a great deal more than we do now about these very early years of Hebrew history, and there may be even more wonderful discoveries than the bodies of the Pharaohs.

CHAPTER III

The Exodus and the Conquest of Canaan

THERE are three different accounts in the Bible of how the Israelites escaped from Egypt. They are all mixed up together in the Book of Exodus. These accounts were written many hundred years after the time, so they are not all alike in everything. It is just the same in our own English history of the early times in this country; different accounts tell the same event with small differences in the telling. There are two very ancient and most valuable chronicles of early English history without which we should know hardly anything of the beginning of our nation. One was written by the famous monk named Bede, and the other, which is called the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," by a number of unknown monks, and they often tell the same events in quite different ways. For instance, Bede says that Alban the first English martyr, died for our Lord at S. Alban's in the year 305 A.D., but the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle says that in the year 286 A.D. "S. Alban the martyr suffered." You see, both accounts tell of Alban's

martyrdom, but they give different dates for it. The accounts of the Exodus all tell in different ways that the Israelites escaped from Egypt, and scholars of Christian nations, especially English, American, French, and German, are trying to find out how their return to Canaan really happened.

It is generally thought now that small parties of them may have left Egypt before the great body of the people went. An inscription on a stele which was written at the beginning of king Meneptah's reign gives a list of people in Canaan who had been conquered by his armies, and one of them is "Israel," so some Israelites at least seem to have been there.

The Bible account says that when the Pharaoh began to illtreat the Israelites, he made them build two store-cities called Pithom and Ramases without giving them the proper materials for brick-making. Explorers have found Pithom and when they dug into the walls, they found that the lowest bricks were mixed with straw, those next above them with reeds and rushes, and the top courses had no straw at all. It is not yet certain where the other city Ramases was, but it is quite likely that it will be discovered.

Their cruel treatment and hard life at last made the Israelites determine to escape from Egypt, and very soon a leader was

found—Moses, one of the most famous of Bible characters. He may well be famous, for he not only helped them to escape, but he also taught them to know and believe in the true God.

We know hardly anything of their religion before this time. There were many gods in the religion of Babylon, the land from which Abraham came to Canaan. At Ur, his home-town, the " moon-god " was worshipped in a great temple which has been discovered and excavated. From the Bible accounts we learn that He had learned to serve only *one* God, with Whom he held close communion, and to Whom he constantly prayed ; that he gave Him the tenth part of his battle-spoils ; that he circumcised his children, and that he believed the highest possible sacrifice to be the offering of human life. Perhaps the different tribes had different gods. They seem to have believed that the life of some animals was very closely joined to the life of men, and so might not be eaten ; that spirits lived in trees, stones, and springs ; and they sometimes offered human sacrifices. They had sacred stone pillars (Gen. xxviii, 18) which always stood by the altars where they worshipped. Many of these have been found in excavated places ; at Gezer ten were found, eight of which are still standing. Wooden posts called " asherim " were sacred

too, and they had images or idols called "teraphim" in their houses. Even when the Israelites had learned to know the true God, it was centuries before they gave up their sacred pillars and posts. Their religion altogether seems to have been very like the ancient Druid religion in our own land, and at a place near Jericho there was a stone-circle something like Stonehenge.

The Bible tells us that when Moses was a grown-up man he left Egypt and went to live for a time with a tribe called Kenites, who lived in Arabia near to Mount Sinai or Horeb. Unlike most of the wandering Eastern tribes the Kenites worshipped only one god, who was called "Jahweh." They had a priest named either Jethro or Hobab, and Moses married one of his daughters, and helped to watch his flocks of sheep and goats on the mountain pastures. During this time he began to understand that there is indeed only One true God, and he learned to think of Him by that Name of "Jahweh," which in English we call "Jehovah." It means 'I AM THAT I AM." In the 4th verse of the 68th Psalm it is written "JAH," which is the poetical form, and it is the last syllable of the word "Hallelujah"—Praise be to Jehovah."

From that time onwards this NAME became the most sacred of all words to those

who believed in the One True God. Where the word "LORD" is printed in capitals in the Old Testament, it means "JEHOVAH": where it is printed with only the one capital "Lord" it means "God Almighty." In later times it was felt to be so sacred that it was never written in full but just the capital "J" and this little sign, 'which is "yod," the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, "J."' The Bible says that Moses learned to know God through a mysterious light burning in an acacia bush in the desert and a voice speaking to him.

The desert and mountain of Sinai became to him a very sacred spot, and when he led the Israelites out of Egypt he took them there and taught them all there how to serve and worship JEHOVAH, and they made a solemn covenant with HIM that HE and HE only should be the God of Israel.

We do not know yet the exact road the Israelites took when they left Egypt. There were two great caravan routes, one called "the way of the Philistines" and the other "the way of the Red Sea." The first was much the shorter and more direct, but Moses chose the Red Sea route, which took them to the wilderness of Sinai. Their way led through very mountainous country, and they would have to travel along deep valleys between the hills, which the Arabs call

"Wadys," beds of mountain torrents. They had great flocks with them which must be fed upon the mountain pastures, and sometimes they were very short of food and water. The Bible accounts describe how God brought them both just when they needed them, letting them find springs and bringing up huge flocks of the quails that come every year from Africa to Europe across the Arabian desert, and providing some kind of food called "manna."

Sometimes the people got very discontented, and were almost ready to go back to their slavery in Egypt. Perhaps this was when the heat was appalling, and they were thirsty because they thought of all the cool vegetables they had always been able to get in Egypt, "the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic." We can understand how they would long for a land of plenty, and when they heard how wonderfully fertile the land of Canaan was, the country from which their ancestors had come, they would look forward to reaching it and settling there at the end of their wanderings.

You know there is a very long Psalm of 72 verses which we sing at Evensong on the 15th day of the month. It is a description of how the Israelites travelled from Egypt to Canaan, and was written for the Temple

choir to sing long after they were settled in the Promised Land to remind them of God's goodness to them, and how often they sinned on the way.

The caravan marched and camped in regular order, each tribe having its own place in camp on four sides of a great square. Silver trumpets gave the signals for marching. Sometimes, no doubt when there was a scarcity of pasture, they travelled every day ; sometimes they stayed in one place for weeks, or months, or even years.

Moses was the " sheik " or chief of all the tribes, and at first he used to make all arrangements, and settle all disputes. Sometimes he would be settling things from morning to night, until Jethro the Kenite priest, his father-in-law, paid a visit to the Israelite camp. Jethro told him that he would "wear away " if he went on as he was doing. Moses took his advice, and appointed other leaders who would settle all the ordinary questions, while he only judged the " hard causes."

While the Israelites were camped at Mount Sinai, their religious life was set in order. A tent or " tabernacle " (the word means a " boarded shed ") was set apart for the worship of Jehovah ; the Ten Commandments were given to them as their rule of life ; sacrifices and offerings were ordained ; the Sabbath day was kept ; Moses' brother

Aaron was their chief priest, and after a time, all those who belonged to the tribe of Levi were set apart as Jehovah's special servants. They carried the tabernacle from place to place, and had special charge of an ark or chest which was used as a symbol of God's Presence amongst them.

The Israelites lived this wandering life in Arabia for about forty years. Once they were close to the borders of Canaan, but Moses could not persuade them to go on and attack the tribes living there. They heard reports from spies who crossed the Jordan and went as far as Hebron, which frightened them, reports of strong walled cities, inhabited by giants so tall that they made the spies feel like " grasshoppers."

All through these years they lived, as wandering tribes of Arabs still live in the same districts, what is called a " nomadic " life. The word means " pasture," because grass for their flocks was the most important thing to them, and they were obliged to travel about in search of it. The Bible tells us almost nothing about what followed their refusal to try to conquer Canaan until the forty years were nearly over. If you will look at a map of Arabia and Palestine in Old Testament times, you will see that the Moabites, Edomites, and Amorites lived on the south and east of Canaan. The Israelites

could only reach Canaan through their lands. Moses asked their kings for free passage, promising to do no mischief on the way and to pay for food and water, but the request was refused. War followed and the Israelites were the victors.

The 136th Psalm, the Psalm in which every verse ends with "for His mercy endureth for ever," tells us how God helped them to conquer "mighty kings" and to win their lands. Two of the kings are mentioned, "Sihon" and "Og." Og was indeed a "mighty king," for he was a giant, who had a bed about nine feet long, which the Bible says was kept as a curiosity long afterwards.

When these lands outside the borders of Canaan were conquered some of the Israelites told Moses that they would like to settle down and stay there. These were the Reubenites, the Gaddites, and half the tribe of Manasseh. Moses agreed, on condition that their fighting men first helped the other tribes to conquer Canaan, which they promised to do. The famous river Jordan was the boundary of Canaan. Look at the map again and you will see that these two and half tribes stayed on the east side of the river, when all the others settled on the west in what we now call Palestine.

Moses and Aaron were still the leaders of

the Israelites when the last year of their wanderings began, but neither of them lived to cross the Jordan into Canaan. Aaron died while they camped again among the mountains of Sinai. The Arabs show travellers now an underground vault with a chapel above it, on the top of Mount Hor, which they believe is his tomb, and to which they bring offerings of shawls, ostrich eggs, and beads.

The Bible says that Moses lived until the lands east of the Jordan were conquered, and the way clear into Canaan, and that he was then still a very strong man, with perfect sight, although he was 120 years old. From the top of a high mountain in Moab he could see a great part of Canaan, and he died there, knowing that God was going to give it to the people he had led so long.

Before Moses died he appointed the leader who was to take his place. All through the years of wandering he had had a faithful friend and servant named Joshua, who had ministered to him, had taken charge of the first tent set apart for Jehovah's worship, and had sometimes commanded in the battles with enemy tribes. Moses told the people that they were to obey and follow Joshua, and so when the public mourning for Moses was over, he became their leader.

At last the time had come for the Israelites

to enter the land from which Jacob and his sons or tribes had gone out more than four hundred years before. The Bible tells us that they had brought the body of Joseph, embalmed as a mummy like the Pharaohs, with them, that it might be buried in Canaan. When the land was conquered it was buried somewhere near Shechem, and may possibly be some day discovered.

The last camping-place of the Israelites was close to the river Jordan, not far from where it runs into the strangest lake in the world—the " Dead Sea "—the water of which is so salt that nothing can live in it, and anyone bathing in it cannot sink. Opposite to them on the other side of the river was a town called Jericho. The banks of the Jordan were, and are still, a dense jungle in which leopards, jackals, hyenas, and porcupines hide themselves. The Jordan is a deep and rapid river, but opposite Jericho there is a ford where it could be crossed. The Book of Joshua which tells us about the crossings, like the other early histories in the Bible, is made up of several different accounts. One of them says that God helped them by checking the current of water.

The Ford of the Jordan is one of the sacred places visited all through the centuries by great crowds of Christian pilgrims who go to bathe there and carry away the

water for Baptisms at home. A great caravan of Greek Church people goes there from Jerusalem in Easter week. It is a wonderful sight to see their camp on the bank lighted up with fires and torches at night.

Jericho was a tremendously strong place. It had a wall more than eleven feet thick, much of which still remains. Jericho is one of the places where a great deal of excavation has been done, and Canaanite houses and pottery, babies buried in jars, lamps, corn-mills and other things have been found.

This strong city was conquered by God's help a few days after the river was crossed, and then gradually the Israelites gained possession of Canaan. The Book of Joshua only tells us the story of their battles and victories for five years, but it took very much longer, perhaps 250 years, before the whole land was theirs. The northern coast as far down as Mount Carmel belonged to a people called Phoenicians. They were great traders and sea-going folk, and Tyre and Sidon were their chief cities. Many scholars think that they were the first people to invent the alphabet, though others think the Egyptians or Arabians used it before them.

Then on the south coast the people called Philistines had several powerful cities, and their land reached down to the desert. They

had a fish god called Dagon, who is mentioned in the letters that were found at Tel el-Amarna.

What was afterwards to be the most sacred city in the world, Jerusalem, was left in heathen hands for quite 200 years, and the Canaanites had several other strong fortresses in different parts of the country.

It would take too long to tell you in this book exactly where all the different tribes of Israelites settled, but you can easily see if you will look at a map of Canaan as it was at this time. The tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe, had no special part of the country, but forty-eight towns in the other tribes were given to these by lot. Sometimes they were fighting with the Canaanites; sometimes they lived side by side in a friendly way, but always the Israelites were gradually getting more and more of the country into their hands. Their leader Joshua, one of the noblest characters in the Old Testament history, lived to be a hundred and twenty. He had always tried to make them love and serve Jehovah, and had been a splendid saint and soldier. He was buried at a place called Timanth-serah, in the land where his own tribe of Ephraim had settled. Ever since the 5th century a rock-grave which is said to be his tomb has been shown to travellers there.

CHAPTER IV

The Judges and the First King

For rather more than two hundred years after the Israelites settled in Canaan they were ruled by judges. We have the Bible history of this time in the " Book of Judges " which is full of stories of fighting and adventure. Of some of the judges we know no more than their names; of the more famous ones we are told a good deal. One of them was a good and great woman named Deborah, who used to hold her court of justice under a big palm tree.

In Deborah's time, the king of the Canaanites in the north part of the country attacked the Israelites. Deborah went with the army under a captain named Barak to Mount Tabor, and there they met the Canaanite captain Sisera and fought a great battle. Sisera had 900 chariots made of iron, such as the Egyptians used, but the Israelites won the victory, and Sisera was killed by a Kenite woman named Jael, who hammered a tent nail into his temple while he was asleep. Deborah made up a song about

it (Judges v), and this is perhaps the oldest piece of Hebrew poetry in the Bible.

Another famous judge was Gideon, who began life as a peasant farmer. For seven years such hosts of Midianites overran the central part of the country that they destroyed all the sheep, and oxen, and asses, and stole the harvests when they were ripe; "both they and their camels were without number." The Israelites hid themselves in "the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strongholds."

Gideon raised a large army of 32,000 men, and went out to meet the host of Midianites. He did not want any cowards, so he told all that were afraid to go home. 22,000 went, leaving 10,000 with him. These he took to a stream and told them to drink. Nearly all of them knelt down to reach the water, but 300 dipped their hands in and drank in that way. Gideon kept the 300 and sent the rest to their homes. To each man he had chosen he gave a trumpet and a pitcher with a lighted torch hidden inside it, and led them to the Midianite camp in the middle of the night. Then suddenly they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers so that the lights could be seen. The Midianites were so startled and confused that they began to fight with each other in the darkness, and the strange battle ended in a victory for

Gideon's men so complete that their enemies "lifted up their heads no more." The people were so grateful to him that they made him their judge, but Gideon told them that God was their true judge.

After Gideon's death one of his sons, named Abimelech, tried to make himself king over the people who lived in the district round Shechem, a very ancient city now called Nablûs. He killed all his brothers except Jotham, the youngest, and with money that had been offered to the Canaanite god Baal-berith hired an army of "vain and light persons." Jotham told the men of Shechem a story of how the trees of the wood wanted a king. One after another, they asked the olive, the fig, and the vine to reign over them, but they all refused, so they had to be content with the bramble for a king.

By this kind of fairy story Jotham meant that Abimelech was not worthy to be king, especially because his mother was only a slave girl. He told them that no good would come of it, and that the day would come when they would be sorry for what they had done, and then he ran away and hid himself. His words came true soon afterwards, for Abimelech and the men of Shechem quarrelled with each other, and there was some hard fighting between them. Abimelech destroyed all Shechem except the tower and

stronghold of the heathen god. The men of Shechem took refuge in the tower; and then Abimelech and his soldiers piled fuel all round it and burnt them alive. Soon afterwards they tried to do the same thing in another place not far away, but as Abimelech was carrying a fagot to the tower, a woman threw a piece of millstone and fractured his skull and so his kingship came to a miserable end.

After his time the Ammonites came across the river Jordan and attacked the Israelites in the central part of the country. In their trouble they appealed to a man named Jephthah, who had a band of soldiers, to fight for them. "Shall I be your head?" Jephthah asked, and they promised to make him ruler if only he would help them. Jephthah prayed to God to give him the victory, promising to sacrifice the first living thing he met when he returned to his own home. His vow ended very sadly, for this first living thing was his only daughter. Many Bible scholars think that we do not yet know the real meaning of this story.

The men of the tribe of Ephraim were very angry with Jephthah because he had never told them he was going to fight against the Ammonites, nor asked them to help. This jealousy ended in a fight between Jephthah's men and the tribe of Ephraim on the banks of the Jordan. The Ephraimites were

defeated and tried to escape across the river, but Jephthah's men stopped each one and asked him if he could say the word " Shibboleth." If he said " Sibboleth " they knew he must be an Ephraimite because they could not say " sh " distinctly. We could generally recognise a German now, if we asked him to say the English " th," in the same way.

The next part of the Book of Judges tells the story of Samson, the strong man, who fought against the Philistines. It would take too long to tell about his different fights with them. At first he conquered, but at last he was taken prisoner, blinded and fettered, and made to grind in the prison at Gaza. He is said to have killed many of the chief Philistines by pulling down the supporting pillar under the roof of the heathen temple. The account of Samson's wedding tells us a great deal about eastern marriage customs, but there is much in his history of which scholars are still trying to learn the meaning.

Long after the time during which the judges were ruling over Israel, an unknown writer wrote a beautiful little story of their times, just in the way that someone now might write a tale of King Alfred's days. It begins " Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled," and you can read how it goes on for yourselves or hear it read in the Church Services, for the little story

is one of the Bible books—the Book of Ruth. It tells how a young heathen girl's love for her Jewish mother-in-law made her leave the land of Moab and live in Bethlehem, where she learned to know and serve Jehovah. While she was gleaning corn in the fields, she met a good rich man who married her, and she became the great grandmother of the famous King David, about whom we shall soon have to think.

We are coming now to the end of the time of the judges, rather more than a thousand years before our Lord was born at the same village where Ruth lived. All this time the sacred ark of God's Presence had been kept in its tabernacle at a place called Shiloh, between Jerusalem and Shechem. When we come to the end of the Book of Judges we read in the first Book of Samuel that it was in the charge of an old priest named Eli and his two sons. One day Eli noticed a woman crying bitterly in the tabernacle court. She told him she had been asking God to give her a son and the old priest blessed her and prayed with her. Nearly a year afterwards a little boy was born and named Samuel.

When Samuel was old enough he lived at Shiloh altogether, where he served in the tabernacle and waited upon Eli. When he grew up the Philistines attacked Israel again. The Ark was taken into the battlefield with

them, thinking it would bring them victory, but the Philistines conquered them and the Ark itself was lost to the heathen foe. Eli's two sons were killed, and Eli himself died when he heard the sad news. The Philistines put the Ark of Jehovah into their god Dagon's temple, but so many misfortunes happened to them while it was there, that they were frightened and sent it back to the Israelites. It was placed in a house at a village called Kirjath-jearim, with a priest to take care of it, and there it stayed for twenty years.

Samuel judged the Israelites all his life, which was a very long one. He was an honourable man, who would never take a bribe, and he used to travel about in circuit as our judges do now. When he was getting very old he allowed his sons to take some of the work, but they ruled so dishonourably that the people grew very angry. At last the chief men came to Samuel at Ramah, where he lived, and told him they wanted a king. At first Samuel was very distressed because he thought it was an insult to Jehovah, who was their King, but afterwards God made him understand that it was right. All through the time while the judges ruled there had been constant wars and troubles; the country was divided; the worship of Jehovah was often neglected, and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

Those are the last words of the Book of Judges, and they tell us how necessary it was that the tribes should be united under one king.

The state of Canaan at this time was much like England in early times. The different tribes of Angles, Jutes, and Saxons came here ; they founded eight different kingdoms which were always at war with one another, and it was several hundred years before they were all united under one king.

We have to take the history of the times of the judges almost entirely from the Bible only. No inscriptions belonging to these two centuries have yet been found. No doubt the Israelites knew how to write because they would have learned in Egypt, but at present only such things as pottery and burial-jars, and the sacred pillars, have been found in Palestine, and the inscriptions found in Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria mention none of the events in the Bible history of this period. It is quite possible that much more may be known in the future, and we may also learn more when we understand better how the Bible accounts were gathered up into the Books we have now. The 83rd Psalm tells the story of the judges' times.

The writer of the First Book of Samuel had two accounts of how the first king of Israel was chosen, and he used them both, sometimes copying from one and sometimes

from the other. In the tribe of Benjamin there was a very tall handsome man named Saul, who seems to have lived the usual eastern life of cattle-tending. One day his father found that three of his asses had strayed away, and sent Saul and a servant to look for them. They searched for three days without success, and were going to give up looking when the servant remembered that they were near Samuel's home. He suggested to his young master that it might be worth while to ask the old man whether he could help them, because everything he said always came true, so they went to Ramah. At the gate of the city they met Samuel, who welcomed them, told them the asses were found, and took them into the "parlour," where thirty other guests were waiting for Samuel to bless the meat which had been offered to Jehovah in sacrifice. That night Saul slept on the flat roof, and very early in the morning, "about the spring of the day," Samuel told him that he was to be the first king of Israel, and poured holy oil upon his head.

Isn't it a wonderful thought that what Samuel did to the first king of Israel three thousand years ago, the Archbishop of Canterbury did to our own king George before he was crowned in Westminster Abbey? Soon after Saul was anointed Samuel pre-

sented him to the people and they shouted "God save the king." That shout also forms part of our Coronation Service, when the Archbishop presents the king to the people.

Wars went on all through Saul's reign, especially with the Amalekites and the Philistines. His good son Jonathan distinguished himself greatly in the battles. Once he and his armour-bearer attacked an outpost of the Philistines on the top of a rocky crag, to which they had to climb on their hands and feet, and killed twenty of them. There happened to be an earthquake at the same time, and the Philistine army became frightened, and confused, so that they fought with each other. Saul's army saw what was happening and started in pursuit. Saul ordered them to fast until evening, but Jonathan, knowing nothing of this, helped himself to honey from a wild bees' nest as they went through a wood. When Saul heard of it, he said Jonathan must die, but the people refused to allow him to be killed, because his brave action had led to their victory.

The Amalekite war also ended in victory for the Israelites, but Saul disobeyed the order to destroy them and their herds entirely which Samuel gave him before the battles. Because of this disobedience Samuel never came to see Saul again as long as he lived.

Soon after this Saul began to have sad fits of great depression, and his servants suggested that music would help him to throw them off. One of them said that he knew a young man who could play wonderfully on his harp, was a clever speaker, and a brave soldier, and had a handsome face. His home was at Bethlehem, and his name was David, which meant "beloved."

Saul sent for David, little knowing that God had chosen him to be the next king of Israel, and that Samuel had already anointed him for that great position. You all know the story of the day at Bethlehem when Jesse brought seven of his sons to Samuel to see which God had chosen to be king, and how the right man was not among them. The youngest son was keeping sheep in the Bethlehem fields when he was hurriedly fetched from his quiet work, and told that he was to be a king. How little the bright-faced shepherd boy imagined that so long as the world lasts his life-story and his songs would be read and sung in God's worship.

When the messengers from Saul came, David went with them and the melancholy king loved him and his music dearly. He made David his armour-bearer, had him to live in his house, and after a time allowed him to marry his daughter. Jonathan and David became such friends that even now

when people love each other dearly we say they are like David and Jonathan. All Saul's servants loved David too, because he behaved so well, and the Bible says "his name was much set by."

Before long he became a hero to the whole nation through a fight with a Philistine giant named Goliath. The Bible accounts say he belonged to a family of giants, one of whom had six fingers and six toes, and that he himself was over nine feet high. Every day he used to come out and jeer at the Israelites, offering to fight any man amongst them, and promising that the Philistines would be servants to any man who could conquer him. David overheard him and made up his mind to try.

Saul and Jonathan were the only people in the army who had spears and swords. The rest were only armed with sticks, axes, and slings just like those boys use now. In the tribe of Benjamin there were seven hundred left-handed men; "every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss." David would take no other weapon but his sling when he went to meet Goliath, and with that he killed the giant. The death of their huge champion so depressed the Philistines that they ran away, and the Israelites won a great victory.

Many times after this David led them to

victory, and at last Saul became very jealous of his popularity. More than once he tried to kill him, and David was obliged to leave his court and hide himself. Saul's insane fits got worse, and the people thought God had left him. He consulted a witch, who told him that he would die the next day in the battle he was going to fight against the Philistines. This came true, for the Israelites were defeated, and not only Saul but Jonathan and his other two sons were all killed.

Perhaps you will wonder that there are no inscriptions or monuments telling us of this time in the history of the Holy Land, but you must remember that the country that is so very important to us was only like a small colony to the great nations who lived round the Holy Land at the time. Palestine is not nearly as large as Wales, and the Israelites were only wandering tribes like those who live in eastern deserts now. Compared with great empires like Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt they were of no importance at all, and it is quite natural that historians should take little or no notice of them.

During the eighty years that followed Saul's death, however, we shall find that they became much better known, and we shall soon find interesting things about them outside the Bible as well as in that Holy Book.

CHAPTER V

The Reigns of David and Solomon

AFTER the death of King Saul and his sons there was a time of trouble and disturbance. A general named Abner proclaimed Ishbosheth, another son of Saul, King, but the tribe of Judah chose David. The two parties fought with each other, and the Bible account says "David waxed stronger and stronger, but the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." At last both Abner and Ishbosheth were killed, and then David was king indeed.

His capital was Hebron, the old city where Abraham had lived so long before, and he reigned there for seven and a half years. About twenty miles away there was a very strong fortress town built on a steep hilly ground with deep valleys almost all round it. If you have seen Durham you will know what kind of place it was. The people who lived there had never been conquered by the Israelites, but now David attacked these Jebusites, determined to conquer their strong city. He promised that the first of his

soldiers who could get into the place should be the captain of his army.

A brave man named Joab succeeded in getting in through a " gutter," which probably means a channel cut to supply the place with water ; the Jebusites were conquered, and their fortress city became David's capital. How little any of those soldiers who marched into Jerusalem could imagine what that city would mean to the whole wide world in the ages to come ! From that time onwards it was the centre of God's worship, growing more and more sacred until about a thousand years afterwards the Son of God Himself was crucified there.

The greater part of David's reign was disturbed by wars with the tribes outside the Holy Land as well as with the Philistines. He conquered them one after another, increasing his kingdom every time. He had great trouble, too, with his sons. Two of them, Absalom and Adonijah, rebelled against him, and at one time Absalom nearly succeeded in making himself king. David had to leave Jerusalem with all his household except ten women who were left in charge of the palace. It was not for long, however, for Absalom came to a sad end. He had magnificent hair of great length ; it caught in a tree when he was riding his mule through a wood, and before he could get free Joab

found him and killed him. There is a tomb outside the walls of Jerusalem now which is said to be Absalom's. When Jews pass it, they throw stones at it, because of his rebellion against David, and one side of it is broken away.

The Hebrews, as the Israelites were often called after this time, were beginning now to live in towns and villages, and were no longer "nomadic" or wandering people. King David himself had a house in Jerusalem built of cedar wood by clever Phoenician masons and carpenters, sent to him by Hiram the king of Tyre. He had brought the Ark of God's Presence to Jerusalem, and placed it in a tent or tabernacle, but one day when he was sitting in his cedar house he thought that it was not right to leave the Ark in a tent while he had such a fine dwelling. He made up his mind to build a permanent house for the worship of God, but a holy man named Nathan told him that it was not God's will. His son would have a peaceful reign, and he must build the sacred house. No doubt David was disappointed, but he gave up the thought of building the house himself. During the rest of his life he collected all kinds of building materials, and treasures of every sort, ready for his son to use when the time should come, and provided workmen who knew how to use them.

Until that house should be built, the service of God was carried on regularly every day in the tabernacle, and the king took great pleasure in providing everything that was necessary for reverence and beauty.

Long after David's reign the great collection of sacred poems which we call the " Psalter " was made. It is like our " Hymns Ancient and Modern," because the Psalms in it were written at many different times. Amongst them are some which King David wrote for the tabernacle services, and we, three thousand years afterwards, love to sing them in the Church of God. Even children love the 23rd Psalm, the little Psalm about his shepherd life with its joys and its dangers when, as one of the Bible Books say, " he played with lions as with kids and with bears as with lambs " in defence of his sheep.

Another Psalm, the 51st, tells of a sad event in this great king's life when for a time he forgot God. He wanted to marry a woman named Bathsheba who was already married to a man named Uriah, and so he arranged that Uriah should be killed. Nathan told him how grievously he had sinned, and David was truly sorry, and prayed for pardon from God.

His reign lasted for forty years. When he died he was buried on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. The Mohammedans show

travellers now the place where they say his tomb still exists, but they only allow Christians to look down into the vault through a grating.

Before he died, David said that his son Solomon was to succeed him, and had him crowned and anointed by Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet who had so often told him God's Will. The anthem in our Coronation Service which is always sung when an English sovereign is anointed with sacred oil tells about Solomon's coronation.

After his death King David was always a great hero to the people of Israel, and is mentioned over and over again in many of the Bible Books, both in the Old and the New Testaments. No doubt one great secret of his victories was the love his officers and soldiers had for him, especially the thirty "mighty men" who were his special body-guard. Some of their wonderful feats are described in the 23rd chapter of the Second Book of Samuel.

One beautiful little story tells us how three of them risked their lives to give David a drink of water from the well by the gate of Bethlehem, one hot day in harvest time, when he was fighting against the Philistines who had conquered that famous village. They heard him say how he longed for it, and fought their way to the well to fetch

the water, but David said that what they had risked their lives to get was so sacred that he would only offer it as a sacrifice to God. Three cisterns cut in the rock outside the gate are still shown to travellers as the "well of Bethlehem that is by the gate."

Solomon was probably about twenty when his father died. His first thought was how to "preserve the people committed to his charge in wealth, peace, and godliness," and he prayed to God for a great gift of wisdom for his responsible task. His reign was as different as possible from King David's; it was full of peaceful prosperity, and he had no very serious war, though he lost part of what David had conquered. Soon after he became king, he married the daughter of the king of Egypt, and her dowry was that city of Gezer where so many buried treasures have been found. Amongst the precious relics that have been dug up are two or three that belonged to Solomon's time. One is a mould for making jewellery, another is an incense burner shaped like a water-lily, and perhaps the most interesting is a little clay model of a boat, turned up at the ends like a Venetian gondola. The Phoenicians used boats of that shape, and the Bible tells us that the Phoenician king's boats and Solomon's used to go out to sea together.

This king was a great trader, both by sea

and land. Beside those boats on the Mediterranean, he was able to have what we should call a " merchant service " on the Red Sea, because David had conquered the land of Edom which lies between Palestine and that sea. The vessels brought " gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks." Those trading with Tyre brought valuable timber, especially cedar-wood from the famous trees in the forest of Lebanon, for which Solomon paid in corn and olive-oil.

He had caravans going to Damascus in the north and to Egypt in the south, bringing " linen yarn " and horses, " gold, and garments, and armour, and spices." The goods would be carried by camels, just as merchandise is now. If you ever go to the Holy Land you will be sure to meet the long trains of these bad-tempered but most useful animals travelling in single file along just the same tracks as were used by Solomon's caravans, and always with a donkey in front to carry their corn.

Solomon had not reigned very long before he began to fulfil the charge David had laid upon him — to build an " exceeding magnifical " house for the worship of Jehovah, in Jerusalem, with the materials he had collected in readiness. The building of this Temple was by far the most important event in Solomon's reign, and it was more than

seven years before it was finished. There are descriptions of it in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, but they are often very difficult to understand because so many technical terms are used, of which the meaning is very uncertain. Neither of the descriptions as we have them now were written until several hundred years after Solomon's time, but they were copied from older books which are now lost.

There was a large flat space on the top of the highest ground in Jerusalem, and on this the Temple was built. It was in two parts, one of which was so sacred that only the chief priest went in on one day in the year. In this " holy of holies " there were two olive-wood statues of angels, overlaid with gold, with outstretched wings. When the Temple was finished, the Ark of God's Presence was placed under the angels' wings.

The other part was twice as large. It was built of stone and cedar-wood, with a great deal of decoration in gold. There were many other buildings in the large court that surrounded the Temple, and Solomon's palace was part of them. The king added great quantities of materials to what David had collected, especially the precious cedar wood from Lebanon. There were still many people living in the land belonging to the tribes Joshua and David had conquered, and

these were conscripted to cut and carry the cedar wood. It was floated from Tyre to Joppa by sea, and then carried by 70,000 men all the forty-one miles of hilly road to Jerusalem.

When the Temple was finished and the Ark placed in the Holy of Holies, a great dedication service was held, at which Solomon solemnly presented the house to God in one of the most beautiful prayers in the whole Bible. Many sacrifices were offered and everything was consecrated to God's service. Then the whole nation from the extreme north to the extreme south had a fortnight's feasting and rejoicing, " glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the Lord had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel His people."

No doubt the merchant caravans carried the fame of the Temple to other lands for travellers soon began to come to Jerusalem, especially from Arabia. The queen of a country in south-west Arabia was so interested in what she heard that she determined to see for herself whether the reports of Solomon's wisdom and his magnificence were true. Both the accounts of Solomon's reign tell how this queen of Sheba came with a huge caravan of followers and treasure-carrying camels, to visit the king at Jerusalem, and how astonished she was with all she saw.

The Bible accounts do not mention her name, but there is an old tradition that it was Bilkis. When she went away, she gave the king most splendid gifts of gold and valuable spices, and the Jews have a tradition that she brought plants of balsam from her own hot country which did well in the tropical climate of the Jordan valley, and for which Jericho was famous long afterwards.

When the house for Jehovah's worship was finished, Solomon built his own palace, a palace for his Egyptian queen, a law-court, and a building called the " House of the forest of Lebanon," probably from its cedar pillars and beams. There are hardly any remains of Solomon's work in Jerusalem now. Some underground galleries and tunnels have been discovered which may have been there in his time, because pottery made by Canaanites has been found in them. Perhaps more remains may be found when it is possible to excavate there. The Bible accounts say that he had 4,000 " stalls " for horses and chariots, and there are huge vaults under the ground where his palace and the Temple stood which are still called " Solomon's Stables," but architects say that they were built long after his time.

Beside his buildings in Jerusalem Solomon had store cities and garrison towns in many parts of the land, and he kept a large standing

army both of cavalry and infantry. His own household must have been a very large one ; the Book of Kings tells us how many oxen, and sheep, and deer, and " fatted fowl " it took for one's day's food.

Towards the end of Solomon's reign his people began to complain of the heavy taxes they had to pay for all his building, and there was a great deal of discontent. One of his own servants named Jeroboam became the leader of the rebellious people, and Solomon tried to kill him, but he escaped into Egypt and stayed there until Solomon died, protected by the Egyptian king Shishak.

The end of this great king of Israel's reign was not so happy as the beginning. He had many other wives beside the Egyptian princess, who worshipped heathen gods, and he was not contented to allow them to have their own religions but shared in their false worship himself. On part of the Mount of Olives, close to Jerusalem, he built " high places " for the worship of gods of Ammon and Moab, and the hill was afterwards, and is still, called " The Mount of Offence."

Solomon seems to have been a great naturalist. The Bible says that he knew trees of all kinds from the Lebanon cedars to the " hyssop that springeth out of the wall," and had a great deal to tell about beasts, and birds, and reptiles, and fishes.

He wrote over a thousand songs, and spoke many proverbs, some of which were included in the collections that were made in later years which we have now in the " Book of Proverbs."

He was probably about sixty when he died, but we are not told anything about his death except that he was buried in Jerusalem. Before he died some of his foreign possessions were lost again, and the kingdom was not so large as it had been in the time of David, though it was much richer, and better known to the nations all round than it had ever been, chiefly because of the Temple of God and Solomon's own magnificence. After his reign it was never so great again.

CHAPTER VI

The Kingdom of Israel

SOLOMON'S son Rehoboam succeeded him, but almost at once he offended the people so greatly by his arrogance and pride that the kingdom was divided into two parts, never to be united again. The people asked him to make the taxes lighter; but, by the foolish advice of his young companions, he threatened to make them worse. Jeroboam, the rebellious servant Solomon had driven out, came back from Egypt, and put himself at the head of the angry people, and ten of the tribes of Israel made him a rival king. Only the tribe of Judah and part of Benjamin remained faithful to Rehoboam.

The two kingdoms were called Judah and Israel. The kingdom of Judah lasted for about 330 years; the kingdom of Israel for only about 200 years. Sometimes they were friendly to each other, but generally they were at war. Israel was by far the larger kingdom, but Judah was always the most important because it possessed Jerusalem and the Temple. The state of things was much the same as it would be in our own country if England and Wales were separate kingdoms, each governed by its own king.

We have the *Bible* accounts of these kingdoms in the Books of Kings and Chronicles and the prophet Isaiah, and there is a great deal outside the Bible that is very fascinating, especially famous inscriptions that have been discovered, and ruins that have been excavated.

Jeroboam was afraid that his people would go back to Rehoboam if they went on going to the Temple to worship God at the great festival times. He made two golden idols in the form of calves, and set one up in Dan on the northern edge of his kingdom, and the other in Bethel on the southern frontier, telling the people to worship there instead. Many times in the centuries during which the two kingdoms lasted the true God was forgotten and dishonoured, and false gods set up in His place, not only in Israel but sometimes in Judah too, even in the very Temple. " High places " with sacred pillars and posts (see chapter iii) were built all over the country, and priests were made from other tribes instead of the sons of Levi.

While Rehoboam and Jeroboam were reigning Shishak, the king of Egypt, invaded Palestine and conquered many cities, including Jerusalem, from which " he even took away all " the Temple treasures. On the walls of a great temple at Karnak on the Nile he carved a list of these, and this is

the first inscription now known that describes an event recorded in the Bible.

It would take too long to tell in this book the story of all the kings of Judah and Israel, and some of them we know hardly anything about. According to the Bible accounts Israel never had a good king, but Judah had some splendid rulers. Perhaps our best plan will be to have a list of them side by side, with the good kings printed in capital letters, and then to think of the most important things that happened in the Holy Land during these centuries, first in Israel and then in Judah.

JUDAH.	ISRAEL.
Rehoboam.	Jeroboam.
Abijam.	Nadab.
ASA.	Baasha.
	Elah.
JEHOSHAPHAT.	Zimri.
	Omri.
Jehoram.	Ahab.
Ahaziah.	Ahaziah.
Athaliah (Queen).	Jehoram.
JOASH.	Jehu.
AMAZIAH.	Jehoahaz.
AZARIAH.	Jehoash.
JOTHAM.	Jeroboam II.
	Zechariah.
Ahaz.	Shallum.
HEZEKIAH.	Menahem.
Mannaseh.	Pekahiah.
Amon.	Pekah.
JOSIAH.	Hoshea.
Jehoahaz.	
Jehoiakim.	
Jehoachin.	
Zedekiah.	

In the year 722 B.C. the kingdom of Israel was conquered by the king of Assyria, and the people carried away, never to return to the Holy Land. In 586 B.C. the kingdom of Judah was conquered and the people taken away to Babylon, but they did return to their own land after about fifty years of exile.

The first five kings of Israel lived at a place called Tirzah, but Omri, the sixth king, made Samaria his capital, because the royal palace at Tirzah was burnt. Much excavation has been done at Samaria and the new palace in which he and his son Ahab lived has been discovered and opened. The excavators felt sure when they found the ruins that they must be the royal palace, and this was decided when they found an alabaster vase inscribed with the name of an Egyptian king who reigned at the same time as Omri and Ahab. They also found a quantity of broken pottery with very old Hebrew writing on numbers of the pieces, which had been labels for wine and oil jars. Many Bible names are in those inscriptions. Since that discovery scholars have been searching for more of these "ostraka," as they are called, and many have been already found. There must be quantities of them hidden in the earth of Palestine which may tell us a great deal of history in the years to come.

The ostraka which were found at Samaria

tell us that the Hebrews at this time spoke almost exactly the same language as the Phoenicians, and wrote their letters in the same forms. We know this also from a wonderful discovery that was made by a German missionary, the Rev. F. Klein, in the land of Moab in the year 1868.

In the 3rd Chapter of the Second Book of Kings we are told that a king of Moab named Mesha was conquered by the king of Israel and compelled to pay tribute in sheep and wool. In the time of Omri and Ahab he rebelled and won back his land. The German traveller found a " stele " of black stone with an inscription engraved upon it in exactly the same language as that on the Samaria ostraka. When it was translated, it turned out to be king Mesha's own account of his rebellion against Omri and Ahab. Isn't it wonderful to think of it being found and read nearly three thousand years after it was engraved ?

The Germans offered the Arabs £80 for this " Moabite Stone," but when a French official offered £375, the Turkish governor of Nablûs demanded that it should be given up to him. The Arabs lighted a fire under it, and poured cold water on it, which split it into pieces. They were carefully joined together, and if ever you go to Paris you can see this precious stone in the Louvre Museum.

It not only tells us about Mesha, but we also know from it the language in which the first Bible Books were probably written.

During Ahab's reign the king of Syria conquered part of Israel, and the kings who followed him paid tribute to them.

It was in Ahab's reign that Elijah lived and worked for the one true God, in spite of Jezebel the heathen queen, who hated the God of Israel, and tried to set up the religion of Baal in the land. Elisha followed him and lived in the reigns of four kings, from Jehoram to Jehoash. There are many stories about both these great prophets in the First Book of Kings. At one time Elijah lost heart because he thought there was no one left in Israel who cared for the true God except himself. He went all the way to Mount Sinai and asked God to let him die, but the Bible says that God sent him back to the land of Israel and told him He had 7,000 faithful servants left.

In the British Museum there is a pillar of black alabaster covered with carvings. It was found in Assyria some years ago, and when the meaning of the carvings and inscriptions on it was found out, it proved to be a record of the victories of an Assyrian king named Shalmaneser II., who reigned when Jehu was king over Israel. This Assyrian monarch conquered Jehu, and one

of the carvings shows the king of Israel kissing his foot, and an inscription says that he gave gold and silver vessels, and other things as tribute. The kings who followed Jehu sometimes paid tribute to Assyria and sometimes tried to get back their freedom.

Jeroboam the Second, the next king but two after Jehu, won back much of the land that had been lost to the kings of Syria in former reigns. It was a time of great prosperity for Israel, and they gave themselves up to luxury and comfort, forgetting both God and their Assyrian enemies, so that the nation grew weak and powerless.

One man tried to make them see their danger. He was only a small sheep-farmer who also used to gather wild figs, and his name was Amos. His warnings to the careless people are in the Bible, for he was the first of the prophets, and scholars say that his was the first of all the Bible Books to be put into writing. This was about 750 years before Christ. Another prophet, Hosea, also tried to rouse the people to a sense of their danger a few years after Amos.

Some German explorers who were digging in a hill near Megiddo, a place in Galilee, found a beautiful jasper seal, with a lion engraved on it, and the inscription " Belonging to Shama, servant of Jeroboam," which scholars think means this king of Israel.

Jeroboam was succeeded by his son Zechariah, but he only reigned six months before he was murdered by a man named Shallum, who made himself king. After only "one full month," however, Shallum also was murdered by Menahem, who reigned for ten years. While he was king another Assyrian monarch brought an army against Israel, but he withdrew when Menahem gave him a thousand talents of silver which he made all the wealthy men in the country subscribe.

Menahem's son Pekahiah was murdered in two years by one of his captains named Pekah, in his own palace at Samaria. While Pekah was king the Assyrian hosts came again. Their king Tiglath-Pileser had made an alliance with Ahaz, the king who was reigning over Judah at that time. Pekah and the king of Damascus had attacked Jerusalem, and Ahaz had asked the Assyrian king to send him help. Tiglath-Pileser was quite ready, and he conquered many places in Galilee. Pekah was killed by a conspirator named Hoshea, who made himself king of Israel. At first Hoshea paid tribute to the Assyrian king, but after a time he rebelled against him, and "brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year." This Assyrian monarch was Shalmaneser IV., who had succeeded

Tiglath-Pileser. Angry at his vassal's rebellion, he attacked Hoshea and swept through the land until he reached Samaria, the capital city, which he beseiged.

It must have been a very strong place, for the siege lasted three years. The town was built upon a steep hill, now covered with olive and fig trees. We have already thought a little about the excavations that have been made here, in which Ahab's palace was found (see page 68).

In the ruins of Tiglath-Pileser's palace at Nimrûd carvings have been discovered showing how the Assyrian kings attacked the cities they wanted to conquer. They used battering-rams, and were armed with bows and arrows, and carried large shields. No doubt Samaria would be hard to take with such weapons as these, but at last the city had to surrender, but not until Shalmaneser had been succeeded by a king named Sargon.

An inscription has been discovered in a palace he built at Nineveh which describes what happened at Samaria more fully than the story is told in the Bible. This is the account in the Second Book of Kings :—" In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria," and this is King Sargon's account : —" The city of Samaria I besieged, I took ; 27,280 of its inhabitants I carried away ; 50

chariots that were among them I collected, and the rest I caused to keep their possessions ; my governor I appointed over them, and the tribute of the former king I laid upon them." Sargon's account must have been engraved on his tablet at least 150 years before the story was written in the Bible. He could little think that the record of his victory would be buried for five-and-twenty centuries and then found and read again.

Sargon did not leave Samaria half empty of inhabitants. He replaced the people he took away to Assyria with people from Babylon and other places. They were, of course, heathen, and they had several different gods, for whom they made " high places " and to some of whom they sacrificed living children. After a time, however, they wanted to worship the God of Israel because some of them were killed by lions, and they thought the God of the country must be angry. Sargon sent back one of his captives, who was a priest, to teach them " the manner of the God of the land," but they never learned to serve Him truly. They simply added Him to the gods they had already.

In the centuries that followed the coming of these foreigners into Palestine, a great hatred grew up between them and the Jews, about which we shall hear more later on. 750 years after this time, when our Lord

Jesus Christ was living on earth, they would not speak to each other or have any dealings together ; even the Apostles were astonished that He would talk to a Samaritan woman and let her give Him a drink of water.

To this day they still live in Samaria, but very soon there will be none of them left. Several years ago there were only 150. They keep all the old Jewish festivals, and their only Bible is the five Books of Moses, of which they have one of the oldest copies in the world. It is kept in a very costly case in the synagogue at Nablûs, and every time Jacob, the old Samaritan priest, touches it he says " In the Name of God."

Sargon's victory brought the kingdom of Israel to an end. The ten tribes were scattered among the nations in Babylon and Assyria, never returning to their own land again. From this time onwards the history of the Jews is the history of the kingdom of Judah, which we have already seen, consisted of the tribe of Judah and part of Benjamin.

Now we must go back two hundred years and see what happened in that kingdom after the first king Rehoboam died.

CHAPTER VII

The Kingdom of Judah

THE kingdom of Judah had nineteen kings and one queen. Rehoboam's grandson Asa was the first of the good kings. He destroyed the heathen pillars and posts and the altars that had been raised to false gods, and told the people to worship Jehovah alone. At the beginning of his reign he had a quiet ten years, which he wisely used for building "fenced" or fortified cities, with walls and towers and gates, ready for war when it should come. He had battles afterwards with the Ethiopians and also with king Baasha of Israel, in which he was victorious.

Asa and his people renewed their covenant with the true God, and offered sacrifices to Him at the Temple, and when Asa found that even the queen-mother had made an "abominable image" for her "Asherah" (see Chapter iii) he removed her from being queen, broke her pole to pieces and burnt it by the brook Kidron outside Jerusalem.

This good king whose heart "was perfect all his days" had a good son, Jehoshaphat, who did his best to keep his people true to their God. He sent a kind of teaching mission, consisting of priests and Levites, and laymen, from city to city to teach the

people the law, and he also appointed judges in the cities, telling them that they must never take a bribe, but remember that they judged " not for man, but for the Lord."

In Jehoshaphat's time the kingdoms of Judah and Israel became allies, and Jehoram, the crown prince of Judah, married the princess Athaliah of Israel. While Jehoshaphat was on a visit to King Ahab of Israel at Samaria, the two kings went together to fight against the king of Syria at a place called Ramoth-Gilead, and it was in that battle that Ahab was killed.

When Jehoshaphat died Jehoram succeeded him, and his was an evil reign of sad disaster. His queen Athaliah, like her mother Jezebel, tried to introduce the religion of Baal instead of Jehovah into the land ; there were wars and pestilences ; all his sons except the youngest were killed or taken prisoners, and at last Jehoram after two years of terrible disease " departed without being desired."

When his son Ahaziah had been king for one year he too went to visit king Joram of Israel, just at the time when Jehu, one of his captains, had raised a rebellion against him. The two kings fought against him together and both of them were killed.

When queen Athaliah heard that her son was dead, she determined to be queen in her

own right. This wicked woman killed all her grandsons except one little boy of two, who was saved by his aunt. She hid him with his nurse in the Temple, and there little Joash lived in secret until he was seven years old. Then his aunt's husband, a priest named Jehoida, brought him out of the Temple on a Sabbath day, and after arming guards all round the Temple and the child king, he crowned and anointed him. Athaliah, hearing "the people running," came out to see what was going on, and saw the little king standing at the entrance, with his people round him. She fled away by a stable entrance to the palace, and as soon as she was outside the Temple precincts the soldiers killed her. She had built a temple for Baal close to Jehovah's holy house, and that was destroyed, the heathen priest being killed at the altar.

During the reign of Joash the Temple was repaired, but Joash gave some of its treasures to the king of Syria, to induce him not to attack Jerusalem. This king was murdered when he had been king of Judah for forty years. His son, Amaziah, another good king, had wars with the Edomites which he won, and with the king of Israel which he lost. Once more the Temple treasures were carried away, this time by the king of Israel, who had warned Amaziah not to fight with him, telling him that he was like a thistle wanting

to marry the daughter of a cedar tree, and that a wild beast out of Lebanon would tread down the conceited thistle.

Amaziah's subjects rebelled against him afterwards, and killed him at Lachish, the place where the eleven cities were found buried (see Chapter i), and from which some of the Tel el-Amarna letters were written. (See Chapter ii.)

A boy of sixteen named Azariah or Uzziah was the next king. He had a long reign of fifty-two years, some of which was spent in warfare and the rest in building and farming, "for he loved husbandry," and he died of the most terrible of all diseases—leprosy.

Jotham, a good king and a great builder, came next, but we know very little of his reign, except that he conquered the Ammonites, and made them pay tribute in silver and wheat and barley.

A weak and wicked king named Ahaz followed Jotham. He gave up the worship of the true God almost entirely, and built altars for heathen gods. During his reign the great prophet Isaiah lived and preached, and did his best to help the king. He was attacked by the armies of Israel and Syria together, and although Isaiah warned him not to do it, Ahaz asked Tiglath-Pileser the king of Assyria to help him. Two years afterwards Ahaz went to visit his Assyrian

ally at Damascus, and there he saw a heathen altar which he liked so much that he insisted on having one like it in the Temple at Jerusalem instead of the holy altar that had been there so long.

Although Ahaz was so wicked himself he had a splendid son, perhaps the best of all the kings of Judah—Hezekiah. There are two accounts of his reign, in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, the first of which was afterwards also copied into the Book of Isaiah. For this most interesting reign we have much history outside the Bible in the Assyrian inscriptions that have already been discovered, and also a most important inscription in Jerusalem itself.

It was just about the time when Hezekiah began to reign that Sargon conquered Samaria and brought the kingdom of Israel to an end. For the first part of his reign Hezekiah paid tribute to him as Ahaz his father had done, but after a time "he rebelled against the king of Assyria and served him not." Sargon was then fighting with the king of Babylon, whose name was Merodach-Baladan. Just at that time Hezekiah had a very serious illness in which he nearly died. The Bible account says that by Isaiah's advice he was poulticed with a lump of pressed figs. When he recovered the Babylonian king sent some of his officers to

congratulate him. Perhaps the real reason was that he wanted to persuade the king to join him in his fight with Sargon.

This is one of the times which, before any inscriptions were dug up in Mesopotamia, was very puzzling to scholars, because the Bible accounts of Hezekiah's wars with the king of Assyria did not agree with Assyrian history. The only king of Assyria mentioned by name in the Book of Kings is Sennacherib. The account says that he made war upon Hezekiah when he had been king for fourteen years, and sent an army to attack Jerusalem. A list of the places he had already conquered is given in the 18th chapter of the Second Book of Kings, and scholars knew that Sennacherib never did conquer those places.

When the Assyrian inscriptions began to be found the mystery was explained. It was then known for the first time that Sargon was king of Assyria *between* Shalmaneser and Sennacherib, and that *he* conquered all those cities, and also invaded Judaea when Hezekiah had been king for fourteen years. Ten years afterwards Sargon's son Sennacherib, who had succeeded him, invaded Judaea again, and attacked Jerusalem. Scholars now think that the writer of the Book of Kings described the two invasions as though they were only one, although the kings were different, and there were ten years between them.

Hezekiah joined Merodach-Baladan in his rebellion and it was this disloyalty that made Sargon invade Judaea. Hezekiah had to pay a great tribute to keep him from attacking Jerusalem. When Sennacherib became king he was disloyal again, although Isaiah the great prophet told him it would end in trouble, and very soon the Assyrian army was in Judaea again. Sennacherib besieged Lachish, where the eleven cities are buried. The one that existed in his time is the sixth. Hezekiah was frightened and sent word that he would pay tribute again, but in spite of his submission, Sennacherib sent an army against Jerusalem.

All this is described by Sennacherib himself on a six-sided cylinder of baked clay and also on the walls of his palace, which has been excavated at Nineveh. The Bible says he " encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself," and Sennacherib's cylinder records the capture of " forty-six of his strong cities." It tells how the Assyrians used battering-rams and engines, and " mines and breaches," and says " Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem like a bird in a cage," and gives a description of the tribute the Jewish king had to pay, which included all kinds of valuable things, amongst them an elephant's hide and a tusk.

With the army Sennacherib sent against

Jerusalem he sent a letter to Hezekiah by three of his chief officials, called in the Bible "Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshekeh." These were always supposed to be proper names until the Assyrian descriptions explained that they were titles, and meant what we should call the commander-in-chief, the Lord Chamberlain, and the second military commander.

Hezekiah took the letter—probably a clay tablet in a clay envelope, like those you may see in the British Museum—into the Temple and prayed to the God of Israel to help him in his danger. Soon afterwards there was a terrible outbreak of some kind of pestilence in the Assyrian army, from which so many died that Sennacherib was obliged to return to Nineveh. Twenty years afterwards he was killed by one of his own sons, and succeeded by another named Esar-haddon. In the British Museum there is a letter called "Sennacherib's Will," in which he leaves treasure to Esar-haddon, and another letter, still in its clay envelope, written "to the King my Lord" by someone named Asshur Ritsua.

When Hezekiah knew that the Assyrian army was coming to besiege Jerusalem, he stopped up the springs outside the walls, and built a tunnel under the walls to bring the water into the city. In the year 1880 some boys were playing at the entrance to an

ancient tunnel which brings water into the famous pool of Siloam. One of them slipped into the water and as he came up he noticed something like letters carved in the wall. When this was examined it turned out to be an inscription of six lines in almost exactly the same kind of letters as those on King Mesha's Stone, describing how the tunnel had been built. Professor Sayce, one of our great English Bible scholars, sat for three afternoons in the mud and water, copying the inscription by candlelight. The letters had become full of lime from being so long under water, but this was afterwards removed by an acid, and it is now easy to read the inscription from the exact copies which have been made. It tells how the workmen began at each end, and had to make a cross-excavation in the middle because they had not kept quite in the right line. Scholars are almost sure that this inscription was made in King Hezekiah's reign, so this "Siloam Inscription" is one of the oldest pieces of Hebrew writing in the world.

In Hezekiah's reign the "high places" with the pillars and posts were once more destroyed, and the worship of the Temple was made more worthy of the true God. When this good king died "they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres" and the whole country "did him honour at his death."

Manasseh, his little son of twelve, succeeded him, and reigned for fifty-five years, longer than any other Jewish king. Nearly all his reign is one long record of wickedness, until the end; when he repented and tried to the best of his power to undo the evil he had done. He allowed the people to have the idolatrous "high places" again all over the land, and he put an "asherah" or sacred pillar into the Temple of God at Jerusalem, so that the Bible says he was "worse than the heathen."

Towards the end of his reign he was in trouble with the king of Assyria and was taken as a hostage in chains to Babylon, where the king was then staying. He is mentioned twice in the inscriptions as paying tribute or "kissing the feet" of the Assyrian kings. When he was set free and allowed to go back to Jerusalem he destroyed all the heathen symbols, and took the "asherah" out of the Temple, and worshipped the true God with all his heart. A beautiful, humble, prayer which he is said to have composed, is one of the books of the Apocrypha.

We know nothing of his son Amon except that he was wicked without repenting, and was murdered by his servants in two years, and then we come to Josiah, another good king. He was only eight years old, but he had already begun "to seek after the God of David his father." The most important

thing that happened in his reign was the discovery of a Book of the Law which had been hidden in the Temple, which scholars believe to have been the Book of Deuteronomy almost as we have it now. The king, who was then eighteen years old, ordered it to be read aloud in public, and then he and the priests set to work to obey it. A very solemn Passover Service was held with great rejoicings; there had been "no Passover like to that" since the time of Samuel.

In Josiah's time the great prophet Jeremiah was living and teaching, and was a great admirer of the young king, doing his best to help him in his good works. Unfortunately his reign came to a sudden end, when he was thirty-eight. Necho, the king of Egypt, was fighting against the king of Assyria, and as he passed through the land of Israel, Josiah attacked him and was wounded by his archers, only living to reach Jerusalem in his chariot before he died, to the great grief of the whole nation. One of the books in the Apocrypha says that "the remembrance of Josiah is like the composition of the perfume that is made by the art of the apothecary."

After Josiah's death the kingdom of Judah only lasted twenty-two years, but in that short time it had four kings, three sons of Josiah and one nephew. Necho the Pharaoh was master of Palestine for four years of the time,

until he was conquered by Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon. This new conqueror is mentioned in several of the Bible Books, but his name is spelt "Nebuchadnezzar"; only Jeremiah and Ezekiel spell it properly.

The first of the four kings, Jehoahaz, only reigned three months before Necho deposed him. He died a prisoner in Egypt. His brother, Jehoiakim, reigned badly for eleven years, and rebelled against the king of Babylon, who sent bands of soldiers to fight against him, coming himself to besiege Jerusalem afterwards when Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin, had succeeded him. This young king submitted to Nebuchadrezzar, who took him and several thousands of his people, especially the chief officers and nobles and a thousand "craftsmen and smiths" to Babylon. Amongst those exiles was a young priest named Ezekiel, who was afterwards one of the greatest Jewish prophets. Jehoiachin was a prisoner in Babylon for thirty-seven years.

Nebuchadrezzar made Josiah's last son, Mattaniah, king of Judah, changing his name to Zedekiah. After he had reigned a few years he rebelled and Nebuchadrezzar besieged Jerusalem with a great army. The Babylonian king built forts all round the city, so that no food could be obtained. The siege lasted for two years, and then there was nothing left to eat. The garrison

deserted Jerusalem, and the king tried to get away secretly to the Jordan valley, but he was caught and brought to Nebuchadrezzar, who blinded him and took him in brass chains to Babylon. A few years ago a long inscription of Nebuchadrezzar's was found carved on a cliff in Syria. It had been completely hidden by trailing shrubs, and large maiden-hair plants. When it was read it was found to be a list of the wines of the country.

Jeremiah had warned Zedekiah over and over again what would happen ; sometimes he listened, but he never had courage to take the prophet's advice. One time he put Jeremiah into a dungeon half-full of liquid mud, but one of the royal servants let down rotten rags to the prophet to put under his arms, and pulled him up with a rope. Nebuchadrezzar invited Jeremiah to go with him to Babylon, but told him he was free to stay if he liked, which the prophet did, but afterwards he and many of the Jews went to live in Egypt. Jerusalem was almost entirely destroyed ; the walls were broken down ; all that was valuable was taken from the Temple, and the sacred city was left in ruins. Only the poorest of the people, "which had nothing," were left to cultivate the land and take care of the vines ; all the rest were carried away as prisoners to Babylon, and the kingdom of Judah came to an end.

CHAPTER VIII

From the Captivity to the Maccabees

THERE is a collection of five hymns in the Bible called the "Lamentations," which tells us what the feelings of the Hebrews must have been while they were exiles in Babylon, and the Psalm "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept when we remembered thee, O Zion" was written at that time. Some of the verses from Lamentations are still wailed out by the Jews even now, while they stand before the massive wall under the Temple area, at their famous "Wailing-Place," and they write them on pieces of paper to stick in the cracks between the stones.

Nebuchadrezzar settled them in colonies in different parts of Babylon. Ezekiel the prophet lived in one of these colonies by the side of a great canal. They were allowed to trade freely, and possess lands. Many of them settled down quite happily, and their descendants lived in Babylon for fifteen hundred years. Others amongst them were always hoping and longing for the time when they would be allowed to go back to

Jerusalem. The Jews have a legend that they built a synagogue with stones carried all the way from their own land, where they used to worship the true God.

Several of the Bible Books were written during this time, and two of the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, as well as Ezekiel, were teaching and preaching amongst the exiles. They were gradually learning to speak the language called Aramaic more than their own ancient Hebrew, and there are a few short passages in the Bible Books that were written about this time which are in Aramaic.

It is in those Books, too, that they begin to be called "Jews," a word meaning "Judaeans," as well as "Hebrews" or "Israelites."

The exiles went to Babylon in the year 586 B.C., and it was quite fifty years before they had any real chance to go back to Palestine. Towards the end of those years, a great prophet whose name is quite unknown, began to tell them that a king named Cyrus would conquer Babylon and allow them to return to Jerusalem. We can read what he said in Chapters xl to lxv in the Book of Isaiah. He is often called "the second Isaiah," because his real name has been lost, and his book is joined to the first Isaiah's book.

His prophecy came true, for Cyrus did conquer Babylon in the year 538 B.C. He is called in the Bible Books "the king of Persia," and for a long time it was not known that he was really the king of a country called Elam and that he conquered Persia. A baked-clay cylinder was dug up in Babylon which Cyrus himself ordered to be inscribed and on which he says "I am Cyrus the great king, the king of Elam," and describes how he became king of Babylon. The chief town of Elam was Shushan (now called Susa) and there is a description in the first chapter of the Book of Esther of the magnificent royal palace there.

When Cyrus became king of Babylon he sent out a proclamation allowing prisoners to go back to their own lands, and after a time some of the Jews took advantage of his permission. Joshua, the chief priest, and Zerubbabel, a prince or governor amongst them, were the leaders. Cyrus allowed them to have the sacred vessels which Nebuchadrezzar had taken from the Temple, which were still in the royal treasury at Babylon. When this first party of Jews reached Jerusalem they re-built the great Altar for burnt-offerings which had stood outside the main entrance to the Temple, and the sacrifices were offered regularly every day. There

is hardly any doubt that this Altar stood on a great rock now inside a wonderful Mohammedan sanctuary which was built over it about 900 years ago, called the " Dome of the Rock." Until lately no Christians were allowed to go inside, and even up to the time of the late war, it was necessary to have a Turkish and English guard.

The Temple itself lay in ruins all round the Altar, and the City was desolate, its walls broken down and its gates destroyed. Very soon the foundation stone of the new Temple was laid, but the work was soon stopped for a time, because of the jealousy of the Samaritans. You remember that they were strangers brought by Sargon to take the place of the captives he took to Assyria after the siege of Samaria. Esar-haddon also had sent more of these foreigners afterwards. They wanted to help to build the new Temple, and when Zerubbabel refused to let them, they appealed to the king of Babylon to stop the work suggesting that it would be a danger to his kingdom. For some years nothing more was done, until the two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, roused the religious enthusiasm of the people once more.

The work of rebuilding was started afresh, with the full permission of Darius, who was then king of Babylon. He had found the decree of King Cyrus in the " house of the

rolls," which name shows us that books and documents had begun to take roll form, perhaps on skin or papyrus, instead of the baked clay tablets. Darius confirmed the permission and said that anyone who attempted to hinder the building of the Temple was to be hanged on a beam pulled out of his own house.

While this king Darius was reigning he ordered an inscription about himself and his dominions to be carved on some steep rocks at a place in Persia called Behistun. The words were deeply graven in cuneiform (wedge-shaped) lettering; they were in three columns, each column being in a different language. For more than fifty years scholars had been trying to read Persian cuneiform inscriptions, but without success. When an Englishman named Sir Henry Rawlinson had been lowered from the top of the cliff in a basket, he succeeded in taking an accurate copy of this famous inscription, and from it at last scholars learned how to read the cuneiform letters. This has been of the greatest importance to Bible students, because now any cuneiform inscriptions that may be found can be easily translated. The three languages on the rocks at Behistun are Persian, Babylonian, and Assyrian.

The foundation of the Temple had been laid in the year 537 B.C., and the building

was finished in 516 B.C. A solemn dedication service was held in the middle of the winter, and the Jews kept the passover feast once more.

For the next eighty years we know very little of the history of the Jews either in their own land or in Babylon. Perhaps the last ten chapters of the Book of Isaiah were written at this time, and the prophet who is called Malachi, which possibly is not a proper name but means "a messenger," was teaching during these years. A few years ago the American explorers in Babylon at a place called Nippur broke into a small room about twenty feet below the surface of the ground, and found that it had been the "strong-room" of a banking firm called "Murashû Sons," which carried on business there just after the time when the new Temple was dedicated. Seven hundred clay tablets were found in the room, giving a great deal of information about the life in Babylon at that time, from which we can picture the business and social conditions of the Jews still remaining there.

You will remember that some of the Jews, including the prophet Jeremiah, had escaped to Egypt after the kingdom of Judah was destroyed. Hardly anything was known about them until the year 1901, when a quantity of documents on papyrus were

discovered at Elephantine, an island in the river Nile, which were written between the years 471 and 411 B.C. The language of these documents is Aramaic, and they tell us that the Jews had a flourishing colony there, and that they had built a temple in honour of the true God. Many "ostraka" with inscriptions have also been found in Elephantine.

About eighty years after Cyrus had allowed the first Jews to return, a scribe named Ezra, who perhaps was a priest also, led another band back to Jerusalem, and did all he could to restore the worship of Jehovah to its ancient beauty and power. We have the Bible account of his work in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Scholars tell us that these two books and the two Books of Chronicles are really four parts of one book, though they are now divided in the Bible.

Artaxerxes, who was then king, not only allowed Ezra and any other Jews who wished, to go back to Palestine, but he allowed them to beg for treasures to help them in their work, and himself contributed silver, and wheat, and wine, and oil, up to certain amounts, and "salt without prescribing how much." When the caravan started Ezra found that there were no Levites among the people, so they waited by a river until some could be fetched. When the Levites joined

them the long journey began and exactly four months afterwards they reached Jerusalem.

Thirteen years passed about which we know very little except that Ezra was teaching the people the laws of God and trying always to make them serve Him better, and then a very famous Jew arrived at Jerusalem as governor of the city. His name was Nehemiah, and he had been cup-bearer to king Artaxerxes in the royal palace at Shushan. Hearing a sad report of the ruined condition of Jerusalem, he asked Artaxerxes to let him go and rebuild the city, promising to come back again to Shushan.

Three days after his arrival, Nehemiah got up secretly in the night, and rode out in the moonlight to see the state of the walls. At the pool of Siloam he was obliged to turn out into the valley because the beast he was riding could not get through the ruins, but when he had finished his survey he saw that it was possible to rebuild the walls. The work had to be done very quickly because Jerusalem was surrounded by enemies who had made up their minds to stop it. Samaritans, and Ammonites, and Arabians all threatened to attack them, but Nehemiah armed the Jews with swords, and spears, and bows, and arranged that half of them should build while the other half defended them.

For fifty-two long summer days they toiled, never taking off their clothes night nor day except "for washing," and in that short time the wall all round the city was rebuilt, and the gates restored.

When the work was finished Nehemiah and Ezra called a great meeting of the people in the open space in front of the Watergate which was on the eastern side of the city. A pulpit was erected there, from which Ezra read the laws of Moses to the people from early morning until midday. When he read the law about the Feast of Tabernacles, which was kept in the early autumn, they immediately obeyed the instructions and lived for seven days in little shelters made of the olive, and myrtle, and pine, and palm branches, set up on the roofs of the houses and in the streets.

When this feast was over a day of penitence and fasting was kept, and the people made a fresh agreement to serve and worship no God but the One True God. The covenant was written down and eighty-four people put seals on it, beginning with Nehemiah as the governor. The agreement and leases that were found in Murashû Sons' strong-room were sealed in this same way, and numbers of seals have been dug up in many places. When a witness did not possess one, he used his thumb-nail. The seals were often in the

form of little cylinders which were slung on a thin cord and worn round the neck.

When everything was set in order in Jerusalem, Nehemiah appointed deputy governors, one of whom was his brother, and went back to king Artaxerxes as he had promised. Before long he was allowed to return, and was probably governor of Jerusalem until his death. He was a true patriot who loved his country far better than he loved himself.

For more than a hundred years after Nehemiah's time Palestine was part of the dominions of the Persian kings, and was governed by the High Priests.

The inspired Old Testament Books that tell us the history of the Jews come to an end with the story of Nehemiah, but happily we have other books which carry on the story. You know that between the Old and New Testaments there are some books in the Bible called the " Apocrypha," a word which means " hidden." Three of these are histories, and one of them, the First Book of the Maccabees, is a splendid record, very valuable indeed to Bible students. Some of the other books mention historical events. All Christians who want to know the history of God's chosen people between the Old and New Testament times should read the Apocrypha carefully.

Then also there are two books which were written by a very famous Jewish historian called Josephus. He was born just about the time when our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, perhaps only three or four years afterwards, and even when he was only fourteen he was so clever that great scholars used to love to talk to him.

When Josephus grew up, he became a great writer. Two of his books, one in seven volumes and the other in twenty, give us a great deal of information which we could not have had in any other way. The first is a history of Jewish Wars from 175 B.C. to 66 A.D., and the other, which is called the "Antiquities of the Jews," is very like our own "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle." It begins with the earliest Bible times and ends with the year 66, and is one of the most famous of all ancient books. It was first published in 93 A.D., just about the time when S. John wrote his wonderful Gospel.

Nearly a hundred years after the rebuilding of Jerusalem that famous king Alexander the Great conquered the Persian king Darius the Third, and became master of his dominions, including Judaea. Alexander was king of Macedonia, and one of the most successful soldiers that ever lived. He is said to have burst out crying one day because there were no more worlds left for him to conquer.

In the year 332 B.C. he took the city of Tyre after a long siege, and Josephus says that he visited Jerusalem, where the high priest came out in a stately procession to meet him. To the astonishment of his Macedonian officers, Alexander dismounted and saluted the old priest with great reverence, because he said he had seen him before in a dream. We cannot be quite sure of the truth of this story, however, because none of the Greek historians who wrote about King Alexander mention it.

The Greeks were by far the most civilised people in the world at this time. They were great builders, and sculptors, and to this day the beautiful city of Athens is full of the magnificent ruins of ancient temples and theatres and monuments, some of which were there when Alexander was king. They had a fine language too, and many great writers of both prose and poetry, which are still studied by scholars of all nations. It was a very good thing, and a very important thing, for the Jews to be brought into close touch with the Greeks, and learn to understand and speak Greek, because it was spoken in so many different countries, and by traders everywhere.

It was during the time when the Persians and Grecians were rulers of Judaea that several of the Old Testament Books and some

of the books in the Apocrypha, were written, in the form in which we have them now. These are called "Wisdom" literature. They are the Books of Proverbs, Canticles, Job, and Ecclesiastes, and in the Apocrypha Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom.

When Alexander the Great died his empire was divided among his generals. Judaea had been part of the province of Syria, under a "satrap," as the Greek governors were called. A man named Antiochus became king of Syria when Alexander died, and another general named Ptolemy had Egypt for his share. These two kings fought over the possession of Judaea. Ptolemy succeeded in defeating the Syrian king, and so for about a century the kings of Egypt became rulers of Judaea.

The kings who followed this first Ptolemy were all called by the same name, just as the Pharaohs were in earlier times. They behaved well to the Jews, and encouraged them to settle in Egypt, especially at Alexandria, a new city which had been founded by Alexander the Great. Here the Ptolemies collected a magnificent library, so large that it had 700,000 books and manuscripts in it. If we had that library now, we should know far more about the history of these times than we do, but unhappily it was destroyed in later times of war.

All through these years the Jews were learning to use the Greek language in their business and social life, and some time while the Ptolemies were ruling, this led to one of the most important events in Bible history—the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. We do not know exactly when this was done, but scholars think it was between the years 285 and 150 B.C. A letter written by a Greek at the court of Ptolemy the Second says that the translation was made by seventy-two Jews sent from Judaea to Alexandria at the request of the king, because he wanted a copy for the great library, and that the work was finished in seventy-two days.

It is more probable that it was gradually done at different times, but this most famous Old Testament is known as the "Septuagint," which means "seventy," because of that story. When it is mentioned in print it is generally written "LXX." At first it was translated for the Jews in Egypt who had become accustomed to the Greek language, but its use spread very rapidly into other lands, and even into Palestine itself.

CHAPTER IX

The Maccabean Wars

In the year 198 B.C., Judaea once more became part of the Syrian kings' dominions. At first they ruled the Jews justly and kindly, but from 175 to 164 B.C. Syria had a most wicked and foolish king named Antiochus, who tried every possible means to destroy the worship of God and make Judaea a heathen land. He called himself "Epiphanes," which means "the Illustrious," but the people called him "Epimanes," which means "the Mad."

In his time the Jews also had a very unworthy high-priest named Jason. Onias, the high-priest before him, was driven into Egypt, where he built a temple at a place called Leontopolis, and tried to keep up the Jewish worship amongst the Jews in Egypt.

Jason built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, and taught the Jews the Greek athletic games. This became so popular that the very priests of the Temple neglected the Services and Sacrifices. It is said that Jason

even sent Jews to compete in the games at festivals in honour of the Greek gods, giving them money to offer in heathen sacrifices. Another man named Menelaus, who was as unworthy as Jason, offered king Antiochus a large sum of money to make him high-priest instead. Angry fighting followed between Jason and Menelaus, and the king himself brought an army and attacked Jerusalem.

The Jews made no resistance to his entry, but he killed 40,000 of them, and sold 40,000 more as slaves. The walls of the city were broken down, and the gates set on fire. Antiochus made Menelaus take him into the Temple and show him the treasures, all of which, even the most sacred things, he seized and carried away to Antioch, his capital city, leaving Menelaus as high-priest and a cruel man named Philip, "more barbarous" than himself, as governor of Jerusalem.

Two years afterwards this wicked king determined that all his dominions must worship his gods and no others. He sent orders to Jerusalem that the worship of Jehovah was to cease altogether; His laws were not to be kept; the Sabbath was not to be observed; and the Scriptures were not to be read.

A statue of the Greek god Zeus was set up

in the Temple Court, and a heathen altar was buit on the Altar of Jehovah, on which a pig was sacrificed. Get your prayer-book and read the 74th and 79th Psalms, and you will see what good and devout Jews felt in this terrible time. The officers of Antiochus were sent from place to place in Judaea to compel them to offer sacrifices to the Greek idols, and to hunt out and destroy all copies of the Scriptures. Some of the Jews forsook their religion from fear, but numbers steadfastly refused to be disloyal to the God of Israel, and died a martyr's death.

Many great Bible scholars think that the Book of Daniel was written during this troubled time, and that it was the last of the Old Testament Books. We have, however, a splendid description of the times of Antiochus and all that followed his wicked work in Judaea, in the Apocryphal Book—the First Book of the Maccabees, and another not so trustworthy, in the Second Book of the Maccabees. The historian Josephus also tells the whole story in his book about the Wars of the Jews.

In a village called "Modin," somewhere not far from Lydda on the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, there lived a very old man named Mattathias, who had five sons. He was a devout and holy priest, and his sons were all worthy of him. They all had nick-

names—John the Holy, Simon the Guide, Judas the Hammer, Eleazer the Beast-sticker, and Jonathan the Cunning.

When the officers of Antiochus arrived at Modin they called the people together, and because Mattathias was a leading man in the place, the heathens suggested that he should set the example of sacrificing to the Greek gods, promising him gold and silver as a reward. Indignantly the old priest replied that if every subject Antiochus had in the whole of his empire should become heathen, he and his sons never would. Just then, another inhabitant of the place came up and brought a sacrifice to offer on the altar the Grecians had set up. Mattathias instantly sprang forward, killed the false Jew and the heathen officer, and pulled the altar down.

Calling to the villagers to follow, he and his five sons left " all that ever they had " and took refuge in the mountains, where they gathered an army. A great camp of refugees also hid in the mountains, and these were attacked by the Syrian king's soldiers. Because it was the Sabbath day they made no resistance, and a thousand men, women, and children were slain. Mattathias saw that this was not right, and told them that they must defend themselves even upon the Sabbath, if they were attacked.

This venerable old man only lived a few months after his brave action. Before he died he advised his sons to make Simon, the second of them, their counsellor, and Judas, the third, their captain. From the word for "Hammer," the nickname of Judas, they are all called the "Maccabees."

During the next three years Judas Maccabeus won four great battles against the Syrians. In the first the Syrians were commanded by the governor of Samaria, whose sword Judas took from him, and used it himself all the rest of his life. A general named Seron led the next force against him, and was defeated at Beth-Horon, a place on the ancient road from Jerusalem to the coast.

The other two battles were much more important. In both of them Lysias, a nobleman who was governing the whole of Syria while King Antiochus was collecting tribute in Persia, was the commander. The first battle was fought near Emmaus, between Jaffa and Jerusalem, and so sure was Lysias that his 47,000 men would conquer the 3,000 Maccabeans that he brought rich merchants with him to buy his Jewish captives for slaves.

Judas and his small army kept a day of fasting and prayer to God, showing Him their one copy of the book of the law in which the

Syrians had painted idol pictures, and then they won a great victory, completely defeating Lysias, and taking all his treasures of "gold and silver, and blue silk, and purple of the sea, and great riches."

The next year Lysias brought 65,000 men against the Maccabees, and was once more defeated and driven away. This battle was fought at Beth-zur, near Jerusalem, and when it was won, Judas led his force to the Holy City to restore the worship of God and cleanse the Temple the Syrians had defiled.

The sacred place was in such a state of neglect that shrubs were growing in the courts" as in a forest"; the gates had been burned and many buildings pulled down. The Altar which had been defiled by the heathen sacrifice was carefully taken down and the stones packed away until some prophet should come and tell them what to do with them. A new Altar was prepared, and everything made seemly and clean and beautiful once more. Then once again the Dedication Festival was held at the time that corresponds to our "Christmas Day, and seven days after," and in the years that followed this anniversary was always observed as one of the greatest feasts of the Jews. Our Lord Himself kept it while He was on earth nearly two hundred years afterwards, and Josephus says in his history,

" From that time to this we celebrate this festival and call it Lights."

Judas and Simon Maccabeus gradually conquered more and more of the Holy Land, and the country became stronger. King Antiochus died a miserable death, and soon afterwards the Syrian army, still under Lysias, appeared before Jerusalem again. He had 120,000 men and 32 elephants with Indian " mahouts " to drive them. In the thick of the battle Eleazer Maccabeus, seeing the rich equipment of one of these elephants, felt sure that it carried the Syrian king. He fought his way through the surrounding guards, and getting underneath the elephant, drove his spear into its body, and was killed himself by the great beast's fall.

Jerusalem was besieged after the battle until at last Lysias offered terms which Judas could accept, and the Syrian army departed for a time. It was not long, however, before there was another struggle in which the heroic Jewish leader was killed. Judas Maccabeus was one of the noblest of Jews, a real patriot and a true saint. Perhaps whenever you use the expression " See, the conquering hero comes," you do not know that it first meant Judas Maccabeus.

Jonathan, the youngest of the five brothers, succeeded Judas as leader of the Jews. He sent his eldest brother John with the women

and children across the Jordan into Arabian territory for safety, but the Arabs murdered them. In revenge for this Jonathan and his men, hearing that the Arabs were going to celebrate an important wedding, hid themselves where the procession would pass, and killed a great number of the party. They were attacked themselves by the Syrian general Bacchides, and had to swim across the Jordan to save their own lives.

While Jonathan was in command of the Jews, there were rival kings of Syria, who tried, each in turn, to secure his help. They offered him many privileges for his people and many gifts for himself, recognising him not only as high-priest but as governor of the Jews. One king sent him the golden buckle which was the sign of royal blood. Like his famous brother Judas, he was a great soldier and won many victories, but he was killed at last through Syrian treachery at Ptolemais, the place on the Holy Land coast which is now called Acre.

Only one Maccabean brother was left now, the second Simon. He became both ruler and high-priest, and had a much more peaceful time than his brothers. He built a great monument at Modin, where they were all buried, and a pyramid each for his father and mother and the four brothers. There are many interesting rock-tombs at the village

which is now thought to be Modin, but the Maccabean cemetery has not been found. Simon built a castle too, at Gezer, and that the Palestine Exploration Society has found and excavated.

While Simon Maccabeus ruled, the Syrian king acknowledged the independence of the Jews. For the first time for about six hundred years, since Azariah king of Judah had paid tribute to the kings of Assyria, they were really free. They had been subject to Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, Egypt and Syria, but now they acknowledged no rule except that of their own high-priest. There were three fortresses which had kept Syrian garrisons all through the Maccabean wars. One was Gaza, another Beth-zur, and the third was a strong castle in Jerusalem itself. Simon conquered them all, and cleared all the Syrians out. The grateful Jews put up brass tablets in the Temple in his honour, and agreed that the high-priesthood should always remain in his family.

A quiet and prosperous time followed, for Simon had "made peace in the land, and Israel rejoiced with great joy; for every man sat under his vine and his fig tree, and there was none to fray them."

The freedom and independence of the Jews, however, was not to last very long, only about seventy years. Simon Maccabeus died

in the year 135 B.C., and in 63 B.C. Judaea was conquered by yet another great heathen empire, that of Rome.

Between those two years five men and one woman ruled over Judaea, and in their time the country under their control became almost as large as it had been in the time of King David, and very much what it is now. The first ruler, John Hyrcanus, was the son of Simon Maccabeus. He drove the Edomites out of the southern part of the land and conquered Samaria and the lower part of Galilee. His son, Aristobulus I, conquered the north of Galilee. He starved his mother to death, and murdered two of his brothers, and assumed the title of king, as well as being high-priest.

When he died his wife, Queen Alexandra, married his brother Alexander Jannaeus, and they reigned together for twenty-seven years, during which the land on the east of the river Jordan which had formerly belonged to Israel (see Chapter iii) was conquered and added to their kingdom again.

It was during the reign of these rulers that the two great parties we read so much about in the New Testament became important—the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees were the very strict Jews, who wished to keep to all the ancient laws and customs, and hated any mixture with foreign

nations. Their name "Pharisees" means "separate" or "particular." The Sadducees, whose name probably comes from Zadok, the famous priest who crowned King Solomon (see Chapter v), were the priestly party, and they were quite willing to adopt foreign customs and ideas. The "Sanhedrin," the great national Council of the Jews, was made up of both these parties.

King Alexander and the Pharisees were bitter enemies, but before the king died he advised Queen Alexandra to make friends with them, which she did, and so her rule was much more peaceful. They had two sons, another John Hyrcanus and another Aristobulus. The queen made John Hyrcanus high-priest and Aristobulus was put in command of the army.

While King Alexander and the Pharisees had been quarrelling with each other, there had been a sad scene at the Feast of Tabernacles. While the king, who, of course, was also high-priest, was offering a sacrifice at the Altar, the Pharisees stirred up the people against him, and Josephus says that he was pelted with citrons. Later on, when he was more powerful, Alexander crucified 800 men and killed their wives and children, as a punishment for this insult. Queen Alexandra gave up all who had taken any part in this terrible revenge to be publicly put to death.

This powerful queen reigned for ten years. When she died her two sons became bitter enemies, because each of them wanted to be both priest and king, and because John Hyrcanus led the Pharisees and Aristobulus the Sadducees. A clever and cunning foreign nobleman, an Idumaean, named Atipater, was chief adviser to John Hyrcanus, and when his brother's army seemed to be winning the war, this man persuaded him to ask Aretas, the king of Arabia, to help him. Aretas agreed and brought 50,000 men to fight against Aristobulus, who was defeated and besieged in the Temple of Jerusalem. Its walls were strongly fortified, so the siege lasted a long time.

Josephus says that there was an old man named Onias living in Jerusalem whose prayers were believed to be irresistible. He was brought out and set in front of the Temple to pray for the defeat of Aristobulus, but when he knelt down he said: "O God, King of the Universe, on one side are Thy people, on the other Thy priests. I beseech Thee hear not the prayers of either against the other." For this brave prayer he was stoned to death by John's angry followers.

The struggle between the two brothers went on for some time, until both appealed to a Roman general for help and protection, each offering a bribe of 400 talents. The

Roman thought that Aristobulus would be most likely to pay, as he had the Temple treasures, so at first he favoured him, and commanded the Arabian king to withdraw his soldiers. Very soon, however, a much greater general, the famous Pompey, came into Judaea, and both brothers tried to win his favour, Aristobulus sending him a costly golden vine as a bribe.

For some time the question was not decided, but in the end Aristobulus offended the Roman general, and was kept as a chained prisoner. Pompey's army was admitted to Jerusalem by John Hyrcanus, but it was three months before he could conquer the Temple fortress from the garrison left there by Aristobulus. When at last his battering-rams broke down the walls Pompey became master of the sacred fortress. He went into every part of the Temple, even into the Holy of Holies, but did not touch any of the treasures.

When Pompey went away he left John Hyrcanus as high-priest, with Antipater as his adviser, but did not allow him to call himself king. A great part of the land that had been conquered since the death of Simon Maccabeus was taken away from the Jewish kingdom again. In the following years Antipater obtained more and more power, and was in high favour with Julius Cæsar

and Mark Antony, the Roman generals who followed Pompey. Antipater had two sons. He made Herod, the younger one, governor of Galilee, when he was only fifteen. Herod was always on the side of the Roman power, and in the year 37 B.C. he was made king of the Jews, and he married a woman named Mariamme, who belonged to the family of the Maccabees.

Judaea was now part of the Roman Republic, which ten years later became an Empire, when its chief general, Octavian, assumed the title, so familiar to us in the story of the first Christmas Day, of Cæsar Augustus.

CHAPTER X

The Roman Rulers

You will remember that at several times during the history of the Holy Land up to this time, Jews had been exiled into other countries, Assyria, Babylon and Egypt especially. During the Maccabean times they had also settled in Rome and Greece, and other places on the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea. These colonies of Jews in foreign lands were called the "Dispersion" from a Latin word meaning "scattered." They held fast to their faith in Jehovah, and their love for Jerusalem and the Temple; regularly paid the tax of a half-shekel (fifteenpence in English money), to keep up the worship of God, and travelled long distances at festival times to offer sacrifices in the Holy City.

As we have already noticed, these foreign Jews used the Greek, not the Hebrew, Old Testament, and used the same language in their daily life. Both they and the Jews in the Holy Land expected that some day

a great deliverer whom they called the "Messiah," which means the "anointed One," would come to restore their nation to all its former greatness. Their prophets had taught them this hope; it was in the Scriptures they read, and in the Psalms they sang; they were always looking forward to His coming.

This longing for the coming Messiah was one of the great secrets of the Jews' passionate love for the Temple that had been standing in Jerusalem for about five hundred years when Herod became king. He was very anxious to win the respect and love of the Jews because, although he had accepted their religion and married a Maccabean princess, he was himself by birth a foreigner, and not even of noble birth. He wanted to win the approval of the Roman Emperor by his good government and peaceful rule, and so it was quite necessary to have the goodwill of the people. Herod determined to rebuild their Temple on a far grander scale at his own cost, believing that this would win their hearts. At first the principal Jews were afraid of this suggestion, but when Herod promised not to disturb the Temple of Ezra until the new one was ready; not to allow any but priests to build the Holy of Holies, and to have everything necessary collected beforehand, they consented.

The work was begun in the year 20 A.D., but it was not finished for many a year. At the time of our Lord's death, the work had been going on for "forty-and-six years," and it was not really completed until about six years before it was all destroyed in the year 70 A.D.

This glorious house of God was built of white marble, in the Greek style of architecture. A great deal of gilding was used, and Josephus says that from a distance the building looked like a snow-covered mountain, while the light was reflected from the golden roofs "like the sun itself." For eighteen months a thousand of the priests were taught masonry and carpentry that they might be able to build the Holy of Holies. Great courts surrounded the Temple itself, and there were thirteen gates in the walls that enclosed them. Of the holy building no part remains, but the walls round the enclosure and the platforms on which it stood, have not been entirely destroyed. The lowest blocks of the wall where the Jews go to wail their prayers for the restoration of their ancient glory, were part of Herod's buildings. (See Chapter viii).

The Temple was not the only architectural work this king did in the Holy Land. He had a passion for building, and to this day the country has many remains of his work,

especially at Samaria, which he called "Sebasté," the Greek word for the Roman Emperor's title, Augustus. There are the ruins of a temple, a hippodrome, and a "Street of Columns," which went round the hill on which the town was built. About a hundred of these columns are still standing, and many others are lying on the ground.

At Jerusalem he built a great deal beside the Temple, including a palace for himself, a fortress, a theatre and town hall, and a gymnasium, and three towers of defence. One of these near the Jaffa Gate still remains, though it has been raised at later dates. It is still the citadel of Jerusalem, and here General Allenby stood to make the proclamation taking the Holy City from the Turks in December, 1917.

Herod also rebuilt a village on the coast, called "Straton's Tower," and made it into a fine city called "Caesarea," after the Emperor. Great games were held when it was finished in the year 13 B.C., and it soon became one of the most important towns in Palestine.

Herod was a most unhappy man, chiefly through his own violent temper. He murdered the Maccabean princess he had married, and all her relations, and some of his own sons. The Roman Emperor said he "would rather be Herod's pig than his son."

In the year 4 B.C. this splendid but miserable king of the Jews was dying of a horrible disease. He felt sure that no one would mourn for him, so he shut up all the chief Jews in his hippodrome at Jerusalem, and told his most wicked sister Salome to have them all killed the moment his last breath was drawn.

Herod died not long afterwards, but before his death the greatest event the world has ever known had happened within a few miles of his palace. The Son of God was born at Bethlehem, where Joseph the Nazareth carpenter and the young Virgin Mother were staying, to be counted in the census the Roman Emperor had ordered to be taken throughout his dominions.

You know that we count time now from this greatest of all events, the INCARNATION of our Lord Jesus Christ. The centuries before that are marked with the letters B.C., "before Christ," and the years ever since are marked with the letters A.D. from the Latin words "Anno Domini," "in the year of the Lord." We know now that the counting of the years to which we have been accustomed is not quite correct, because our Lord was born about four years earlier than was at first supposed, that is in the year we call B.C. 4, the same year that king Herod died. Just before his death, the "wise

men " from the East came to Jerusalem asking where they could find the Infant King, and were sent on to Bethlehem, because the Jewish Rabbis said that the Messiah must be born there.

When they did not come back to Herod, as he had ordered, he sent soldiers to Bethlehem, who killed some baby boys there in the hope that the " new-born King " would be amongst them, but S. Joseph had taken Him and His Mother to Egypt, where they stayed till some time after Herod's death.

A few years ago a French oriental scholar had a most interesting find at Jerusalem which belongs to Herod's time. One great court outside the Temple was called the " Court of the Gentiles," and no foreigner was allowed to pass beyond it. Notices in Greek and Latin were inscribed on " steles " over all the forbidden parts, and it was one of these notices that the Frenchman found. It says " No stranger is to enter within the balustrade round the Temple and enclosure. Whoever is caught will be responsible to himself for his death, which will ensue."

This deeply interesting notice, which perhaps Jesus Christ often read as He " walked in the Temple," is now in the Museum at Constantinople, but a plaster cast of it stands by the side of the " Moabite Stone " in the Louvre at Paris.

After King Herod's death his dominions were divided between his sons, but they were not allowed by the Emperor to call themselves king. They were "tetrarchs," which means "ruler of a fourth part." Archelaus, the eldest son, had Judaea; Herod Antipas had Galilee, and another son named Philip governed in the north.

Archelaus ruled so badly that the Jews begged the Roman Emperor to send them a Roman governor, which he did in the year 6 A.D. You will remember that when S. Joseph brought the Blessed Virgin and the Infant Christ back from Egypt, he was afraid to stay anywhere in Archelaus's country. He went on to Galilee and settled at Nazareth, in the country ruled by Herod Antipas. This Herod ruled Galilee all through the Lifetime of our Lord, and it was he who helped to try Him at the end of His Life.

He seems to have been partly good and partly bad. When S. John the Baptist was preaching in the latter part of his rule, Herod was often guided by him, until S. John told him of a great sin he had committed. Then Herod murdered him in prison. He was also much interested in what he heard about Jesus Christ, and wanted to see Him very much, but when his desire was granted, he allowed his soldiers to mock and torment Him.

The Roman governors who were sent to Judaea after Archelaus was deposed were called "procurators," a word meaning "to manage for." The fifth of them was Pontius Pilate. They lived at Caesarea, but used to go to Jerusalem and stay in the Castle by the Temple at great festival times, to keep order among the crowds of pilgrims. It was, of course, during one of these times that our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed into the hands of the priests, who brought Him before Pilate for trial, because they had not the power of life and death. Pilate sent Him to Herod Antipas, who was staying at Jerusalem for the feast, because he found that Jesus belonged to Herod's dominions, but after the mockery Herod sent Him back to the Praetorium or judgment hall, and He was condemned to death by Pilate. So long as the world shall last, the Creeds of the Christian Church will tell of that Roman procurator's cowardice in condemning a Prisoner Whom he believed to be innocent.

Our Lord was crucified by a guard of Roman soldiers, and Pilate himself wrote the placard in three different languages to be suspended over His Head on the Cross. He allowed the priests to set a guard over the Holy Sepulchre the next day, which remained until it was scattered in terror by the Angel of the Resurrection.

Pilate ruled over Judaea until the year 37 A.D. He was, of course, a heathen, and had no sympathy with the religion of the Jews. Several times his indifference to their laws led to riots in Jerusalem. The standards carried by Roman soldiers had silver images of the Emperor upon them, which the Jews regarded as idols. Former procurators had taken these images off whenever the soldiers entered Jerusalem, but Pilate marched his men into the Holy City in the night without removing them. This led to a serious riot, and he was obliged to send the standards back to Caesarea.

Another uproar was caused because he used some of the Temple treasures to build an acqueduct for supplying water to Jerusalem, and a conflict between his soldiers and the Samaritans in 36 A.D. led Tiberius the Emperor to summon him to Rome to give an account of his government. He never went back to Judaea. Two years afterwards Herod Antipas went also to Rome, and was not allowed by the Emperor to return to Galilee. While he was ruling over Galilee he had built the town of Tiberias on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, intending it to be his capital, but only the lowest Jews would live there because a burial-ground had been disturbed in the building of the town. There are ruins of the great black Castle he built there still to be seen.

There had been two procurators since Pilate, but when Herod Antipas was banished, both Galilee and Judaea were united under a grandson of Herod the Great, called Herod Agrippa. This was the Herod of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles, who killed S. James the Great and would have killed S. Peter if he had not escaped from prison. He only ruled in the Holy Land for three years, and after his death the whole country was governed by procurators again. There were seven of these governors, two of whom, Felix and Festus, are mentioned in the New Testament, because S. Paul was brought before them for trial. Felix kept him in prison at Caesarea for two years, and Festus sent him to Rome to be judged by the Emperor himself.

From the time when Judaea first became a Roman province, the Jews had often tried to recover their independence, and there had been several revolts, whenever the Roman governors did things they did not like. One man named Judas, in the year 7 A.D. had raised a serious rebellion, and although he was defeated and killed, his followers became a powerful party called the "Zealots." They were always ready to fight against the Roman rule, and stir up the Jews to resist it. One of our Lord's Apostles was a Zealot—Simon the Canaanean.

During the time of these last procurators the Zealots were very active, and the Jews grew more and more restless and turbulent, especially while Felix was ruling Judaea. Villages were burnt ; whole districts were plundered ; there were street fights in many places ; the high priest was killed and his palace destroyed, and when the last procurator, a man named Florus, seized some of the Temple treasures, there was no more hope of peace.

To Christians the times of Herod the Great and Herod Antipas are the most important in the history of the world, because of our Lord's Incarnate Life in Palestine, that Life that gave it the name of " The Holy Land." We know now, after nearly two thousand years, what an enormous difference Jesus Christ has made to the world, and how marvellous the results of His Life have been, but, at the time, His Birth and Death meant no more to the Jews or Romans than the birth and death of any other peasant who took a part in public life, and offended the rulers. His Resurrection was known only to those who believed that He was the Son of God : the Bible tells us that He never let anyone else see Him after the first Easter Day. You will perhaps wonder whether Josephus, who wrote so much about these times, and lived so soon after the Crucifixion,

says anything about Him. We cannot be quite certain whether he mentions Him or not. There is a famous passage in his book about Jewish "Antiquities," but most scholars think that it was not written by Josephus himself, but put in afterwards by some other writer. This is the passage :— "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call Him a man, for He was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was Christ ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned Him to the Cross, those that loved Him at the first did not forsake Him, for He appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning Him ; and the tribe of Christians, so named from Him, are not extinct at this day."

We shall have to think a great deal about Josephus in the next chapter, because he not only wrote the history of what followed the rebellion of the Jews against the Romans, but took part in it himself.

Perhaps a little table of kings and governors, with those mentioned in the Bible printed in capital letters, will help us to remember the

history of the time when the Son of God was living His Human Life on earth.

Antipater, the Idumaean. (See Chapter IX)	
The Herods.	Procurators.
HEROD THE GREAT (King of the Jews when Christ was born).	
ARCHELAUS (Tetrarch of Judaea).	Coponius.
PHILIP (Tetrarch of Ituraea).	Marcus Ambivius.
HEROD ANTIPAS (Tetrarch of Galilee during the Life of Christ).	Annius Rufus.
	Valerius Gratus.
HEROD AGRIPPA (Grandson of Herod the Great).	PONTIUS PILATE.
	Marcellus.
	Marullus.
	Cuspius Fadus.
	Tiberius Alexander.
	FELIX.
	PORCIUS FESTUS.
	Albinus.
	Florus.

CHAPTER XI

The Destruction of Jerusalem

At last, in the year 66 A.D., the Jews broke out into open rebellion against the Roman authority. Perhaps they would have won their freedom, as they did in the time of the Maccabees, if they had been really united, but the different parties amongst them hated each other so bitterly that there was constant civil war.

It was not only in Palestine that they rebelled. The Jews in Alexandria, and Damascus, and other places raised serious riots against Rome, and thousands of them were killed.

A general named Cestius was sent to Palestine with an army, to restore order. He besieged Jerusalem, but was defeated by the garrison, and obliged to withdraw. The Roman Emperor at this time was Nero, the "Cæsar" to whom S. Paul appealed when he was being tried by the procurator Festus. He sent one of his greatest generals, a man named Vespasian, to Palestine to conquer

his rebellious subjects, and Vespasian's son Titus, as great a soldier as himself, went with him. Both these famous Roman soldiers had previously won victories in our own England, when the British, like the Jews, had tried to recover their freedom.

The Jews had made Josephus, the historian, commander of their forces in Galilee, and he wrote in his book on the Wars of the Jews the most minute history of all that happened. He fortified the towns as well as he could, and tried to teach the people the Roman ways of fighting, but his work was much hindered by the jealousy of another leader named John of Giscala, and also by the jealousy of the chief towns in Galilee, especially Tiberias and Sepphoris. When Herod Antipas failed to make Tiberias his principal city, he rebuilt Sepphoris and it became the capital of Galilee.

Vespasian had an army of 60,000 men. He soon conquered all the Galilean towns except one on the side of a steep hill called Jotapata, which the Jews thought was impregnable. Josephus encouraged the garrison to resist and for forty-seven days the Romans tried in vain to conquer it. The place was surrounded on three sides by deep chasms, and Josephus built a strong wall across the north side where it was connected with the hills.

The sufferings of the Jews in Jotapata

were terrible, especially from thirst. The siege took place in the middle of summer, when there is no rain in Palestine, and as there was no spring in the town, the garrison had to depend upon cisterns, which were soon almost exhausted. There are several ancient cisterns still remaining in the hill between Acre and Nazareth, on which the fortress of Jotapata stood.

The Romans heard of the scarcity of water and felt sure that they would only have to wait a short time before the Jews would be obliged to surrender. Josephus, hearing this, made his soldiers soak clothes in the little water they had left, and hung them out to drain on the walls, to deceive the Romans. There was one steep unguarded path by which the Jews could crawl out covered with sheepskins to make themselves look like dogs, but the Romans soon discovered it and stopped them.

Vespasian brought a huge battering-ram, and began to beat down the walls. Josephus filled sacks with chaff, and lowered them in front of the ram to break the force of the blows, but the Romans cut the sacks down with scythes fixed on long poles. A man named Eleazar managed to break off the head of the ram with a heavy stone; he jumped down from the wall, and secured it, but as he stood triumphantly on the top

again, holding it in his hands, he was struck by five arrows, which killed him.

When the siege had lasted for forty-seven days the Jews were almost exhausted. One of them deserted, and told Vespasian that if he would attack in the early hours before dawn, he would find the defenders sleeping and be able to take the place. The Roman general tried this plan on a night when there was a very thick mist. It was quite successful, and the Jews woke up to find the Roman army in the city. A horrible massacre followed; every man that could be found was either killed or taken prisoner, but Josephus was nowhere to be found.

He, with forty other Jews, had jumped down into the shaft of a well, from which there was a passage into a cave where some provisions had been stored. In a few days the Romans discovered them, and Vespasian offered Josephus his life, if he would surrender. He was willing, but the other Jews would not allow it. They agreed to kill each other, drawing lots to decide the order of their death rather than fall into Roman hands. Josephus and one other were the last, and they surrendered.

When Josephus was brought before Vespasian, he told the Roman general that he had dreamed that he would soon be Emperor of Rome, which so pleased the great soldier

that he pardoned him. From that time onwards, Josephus was on the side of the Romans.

Vespasian intended to besiege Jerusalem now Jotapata had been taken, but before he could reach the Holy City, the Emperor Nero died, and he had to wait for further orders. Three Emperors followed Nero in that one year, and then, as Josephus had foretold, Vespasian became Emperor, "the sovereign lord of earth and sea, and of the whole human race."

For two years little was done by the Roman army in Judaea, but Jerusalem was in a sad state all the time. It was full of Zealots, who were divided into three parties, constantly fighting with each other. One party, under a leader named Eleazar, held the Temple; another under Eleazar's father Simon, held the upper part of the city; and the third party in the lower city was commanded by Josephus's rival John of Giscala.

Over and over again the streets and the Temple courts were covered with dead bodies; the granaries where the corn was stored were set on fire; "catapults" and "balistas" were used inside the city; and many of the buildings were completely destroyed.

All through this miserable time, the services and sacrifices in the Temple went on as usual, and in the spring of 70 A.D.,

when the Roman army under Titus surrounded the Holy City, nearly a million pilgrims were in and about Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover.

Josephus was with the Roman general, acting as a messenger or ambassador between him and the Jews. There seems to be no doubt that Titus wished to save the Holy City and the Temple from destruction. He offered pardon and peace to the Jews several times during the six months' siege, but his terms were refused with scorn.

Jerusalem was a strongly-fortified city, very difficult to take. It had three walls round it, which must be taken one by one, and there were fortified walls round the Temple enclosure, and three enormously strong towers in the city. The three Zealot parties had about 24,000 fighting men altogether, and Titus had at least 80,000. There were ninety towers in the first wall, fourteen in the second, and sixty in the third. The first two walls were conquered in a short time at the beginning of May, A.D. 70. Titus then built a military wall all round the city to stop any provisions coming in, and very soon there was a state of famine of which Josephus gives the most horrible description. Still the Jews held out, throwing the dead bodies of those who died from starvation over the wall. On the night of

the 5th of July Titus obtained possession of the castle close to the Temple, which had been headquarters of the procurators and the Roman garrisons.

By this time over 115,000 Jews had perished in this awful siege, and all that remained in the city were on the very verge of starvation. They were eating girdles, and shoes, and wisps of old hay. Sometimes parties of them ventured outside the wall in the night to gather grass and wild herbs. Those whom they caught the Romans crucified in front of the garrison. Titus sent Josephus to a place where he could make John of Giscala hear, and offered peace again, but once more it was scornfully rejected, so the Temple, the last stronghold of the city, was attacked.

The cloisters or colonades all round it were set on fire ; the ground was levelled for the Roman battering-rams ; and the fight went on until the 10th of August, the very day on which Solomon's Temple was destroyed by the king of Babylon about six hundred years before. Titus had gone to bed after the long day's fighting, when there was a horrified shriek of trouble from the Jews, and it was seen that the Temple itself was on fire. A soldier had thrown a lighted torch through a small door or window, and very soon it was plain that nothing would put out the flames.

Titus did everything he possibly could to save the holy building, but it was impossible. The whole top of the hill was like a volcano ; thousands of the Jews were killed in the sacred courts ; the floors and steps were washed down with streams of blood, and the Romans had to climb over heaps of dead bodies of starved people. Six thousand, some of them women and children, were burned to death, in a small building where they had taken refuge.

Some of the treasures of the Temple were saved, amongst them the vestments of the High Priest, and the golden table and candlesticks, and quantities of precious spices, but the building that had been so glorious was utterly and entirely destroyed, as our Lord had foretold forty years before.

A few days after this great calamity, Jerusalem was completely conquered. John of Giscala and Simon were taken prisoners ; thousands more were killed ; and all above seventeen years old were either sent to work in Egpytian mines, or to fight with wild beasts in Roman theatres.

The fortifications and walls of Jerusalem were thrown down, only the three towers in the city being left as a memorial of the siege. Titus took John of Giscala and Simon to Rome, with 700 of the tallest and handsomest Jews, and the treasures of the Temple.

A magnificent " triumph " was given to the successful general; the Temple treasures were shown to the people; there were extraordinary pageants representing his victories; John and Simon and the other captives walked in the procession, and at the end of the triumph Simon was dragged to a place near the great market-place of Rome with a rope round his neck, and executed.

Eleven years later, a splendid Arch of Triumph was built in honour of Titus, which is still standing in Rome, and on which the candlesticks and table, the censers and silver trumpets from the Temple at Jerusalem are carved.

Special gold and silver coins were struck as memorials of the conquest of Palestine, which are still in existence. " Judaea " is a desolate woman sitting alone under a palm-tree, with the words " Judaea captive," and on other coins a Jewish soldier with his hands bound.

You will want to know what became of Josephus when his country was conquered. Titus allowed him to save the lives of more than 200 of his friends, and gave him gifts of land. He probably spent the rest of his life at Rome, writing his books about the Jews, which are so valuable to us now, but there is no record of his death.

The struggle against the Romans was

almost over with the fall of Jerusalem. Two or three castles near the Dead Sea held out for a short time, but they were soon conquered, and their garrisons killed. The tenth "legion" or regiment of Roman soldiers camped at Jerusalem for some years, and the country gradually became quiet.

Some of the most learned Jews still living in Palestine settled, first at Sepphoris and then at Tiberias, the town on the Sea of Galilee where, in the time of Herod Antipater, they had refused to live. A famous school was founded there, at which they studied all the laws and traditions which had been handed down through all the centuries of Jewish national life. These were written down in what was called the "Talmud," which means "Teaching." It contained four thousand laws.

Even at this present time, Tiberias is a centre for Jewish learning, two-thirds of its inhabitants being Jews. Many of those who live there now are Polish Jews; they look very strange in their tall black hats and furs, which they wear even in the hottest weather. Many of them are beggars living on charity.

In the year 132 A.D. a Jew named Bar-Cochba, the "Son of the Star," gave out that he was the Messiah, and had come to deliver the nation from Rome. Great numbers of Jews followed him, and rebelled against the

Emperor Hadrian. They took and fortified fifty castles and nearly a thousand villages before a general named Severus arrived to put down the revolt. Then once more and for the last time, they were conquered. Every building in Jerusalem was destroyed, and the ground ploughed over, and Bar-Cochba was killed.

Hadrian ordered Jerusalem to be rebuilt as a Roman town, and changed its name to "Ælia Capitolina." Ælius was his family name; the "Capitolina" was one of the hills on which Rome was built, where a great temple dedicated to Jupiter stood. Hadrian built a temple to this heathen god where the Temple of God had stood at Jerusalem, and erected a statue of himself on the site of the altar, and no Jews were allowed to enter the city on pain of death.

In later times, they were allowed to stand on one of the surrounding hills, from which they could see the Temple site. One Emperor allowed them to visit it one day in each year, the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple, but they had to enter by the "dung gate," and it was not until the Christian faith became the religion of the Empire that they were allowed to go in and out of Jerusalem with freedom.

In the hundred years that had passed since the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ,

the Christian Church had been working and growing, not only in Palestine, but in many other countries, even in Rome itself. The New Testament Books, the Gospels and Epistles, and S. John's Revelation, had been written, but they were not gathered into one collection for several hundred years. The Apostles were all dead, even S. John, who lived to be over a hundred years old, but their successors were carrying on their work and teaching. S. John at least must have known of the destruction of Jerusalem, but it is not mentioned in the New Testament, and of course the history of the Bible ceases now. All that happened in Palestine in later times, we have to learn from other sources.

The Jews were scattered all over the civilised world, and have never been a united nation since. In many Christian lands they have been persecuted in the most cruel manner, oppressed and tortured and often killed. In after times, every large city had a place called the "Ghetto," in which the Jews were obliged to live, and in which they were often locked at night. There is a Church near the Guildhall in London, still called S. Lawrence Jewry, which was formerly in the Jews' quarter; some of the streets in that district also have Jewish names.

Although they were scattered into all lands, however, they always remained a

separate people, unlike any other race in the world. For some time now, they have been gradually going back to Palestine, settling down in colonies. Wealthy and devout Jews in many countries have longed to see their nation back in its own famous land, and have given great sums of money to make it possible. This is what is called the "Zionist" Movement, which you will probably hear much about in the years to come.

The first scattered Jews to go back were Russians and Roumanians, but they were followed by those from other lands. They have many colonies in Palestine now; ten in Judaea, sixteen in Galilee, five in Samaria, and one on the east of the Jordan. At these Jewish settlements, scent and soap are made, fruit is preserved, tobacco and flowers are grown, and poultry and silk-worms are cultivated.

Jerusalem has a large Jewish population now, about 65,000, most of them Jews of the "Dispersion" (see Chapter x). They have over seventy synagogues in the city. Those who have always lived in Palestine itself, and in neighbouring Eastern lands are called "Sephardim." Tiberias and Safed in Galilee, and Hebron in Judaea, have a large Jewish population, and there are many settled in the coast towns of Jaffa and Haifa.

CHAPTER XII

The Persian and Mohammedan Conquests

In 324 A.D. the Roman Emperor Constantine became a Christian, and the persecution of those who followed the religion of Jesus Christ came to an end. The next year, the great Council of Nicæa, in Asia Minor, was held, and from that time the Nicene Creed of the Church was openly taught. Pilgrimages to the holy places in Palestine had already been going on more or less secretly, but when the persecutions ceased they became much more frequent and general. By the year 570, there were hospices for pilgrims in Jerusalem, with 3,000 beds.

Constantine himself went to Jerusalem, and so did his aged mother, the Empress Helena. For the history of these times we have a chronicle like the one Bede wrote in England, or the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. It was written by Eusebius, the Christian Bishop of Caesarea, and carried on afterwards by S. Jerome, a monk whose name is in our Prayer-Book Kalendar on the 30th of

September. Jerome lived for thirty-four years in a cave he called " Paradise " under the Church which the Emperor Constantine built over the cave in which our Lord was born at Bethlehem.

The Empress Helena is said to have discovered the Cross upon which Jesus Christ was crucified, buried in the ground at Jerusalem. She had it divided; part was sent to Constantinople and the other part was laid up in a splendid Church which Constantine and she built at the place where it was discovered. It was consecrated in the year 336 A.D. The festival in our Kalendar on May the 3rd, called the " Invention (or " finding ") of the Cross," commemorates Helena's discovery. This most famous of all Churches has been altered and rebuilt several times, but it is still the great place of pilgrimage in Jerusalem, and is now called the " Church of the Holy Sepulchre."

Constantine would only allow Jews who were Christians to enter Jerusalem, except on the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple. Another Emperor, Julian, who began his reign in 361 A.D., was more friendly to the Jews. He offered to rebuild the Temple, and made a great collection of material, but the Christians declared it would never be built. They were right, but another Emperor,

Justinian, built a Christian Church, dedicated to S. Mary, in the Temple Area, parts of which remain to this day, though it is now a Mohammedan mosque called El-Aksa.

There are several ruined synagogues in Palestine now, especially in Galilee, which were built by the Jews who had been allowed to remain in the country during the 2nd and 3rd centuries after Christ. Many scholars think that the one at Capernaum, which has a pot of manna carved over an entrance, is older still, and may have been the one in which our Lord so often healed and preached.

No one knows exactly when the Jews began to have synagogues in their towns and villages as well as the Temple at Jerusalem. It may have been at the time when they were exiled in Babylon. No sacrifice was ever offered in a synagogue ; that could only be done at the Temple. There was a chest in which the rolls of the Law were kept, but no other furniture except a prayer-desk, lamps and seats for the worshippers. A synagogue is only once mentioned in the Old Testament, in the 74th Psalm : " they have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land " (A.V.), but they are often mentioned, both those in Palestine and those in foreign Jewish settlements, in the New Testament.

In the year 395, the Roman Empire was divided into two parts, with separate Emperors,

the East and the West. Rome was still the capital of the West, but Constantinople, which was founded by the first Christian Emperor, was the capital of the Eastern Empire, of which Palestine formed a part. After the division the Holy Land had about two hundred peaceful years, but the Jews were never contented under the Roman rule, and were always watching for a chance to revolt against it. The Christian Jews built many churches in the country during the 4th and 5th centuries, some of which had beautiful mosaic pavements that have been discovered under the soil and preserved. One of these was accidentally discovered at Beersheba, during the war, by some Australian soldiers who were digging trenches. They worked for several days at great risk, until it had all been carefully removed and sent to the Cairo Museum.

In the year 614 A.D. Chosroës the Second, the King of Persia, declared war against Heraclius the Roman Emperor of the East, and invaded Palestine. The Jews joined him, and the army swept through the country, destroying churches and killing Christians everywhere, until at last Jerusalem itself was taken. The Christian buildings were ruined, and Chosroës took the True Cross out of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and carried it away to Persia.

The Patriarch, as the Christian bishop of Jerusalem is called, was taken to Persia also, and 90,000 Christians are said to have been massacred.

For fourteen years Palestine was ruled by Chosroës, and then Heraclius seemed to wake up; from being a slothful, pleasure-loving idler he became a self-controlled and heroic soldier. He led his troops against the Persians, and won one victory after another. He shared the discipline and the food of his soldiers, and he and his horse Phallus were always in the forefront of the battles, in one of which he killed a Persian giant with his own hand.

Chosroës was completely defeated, and Jerusalem was recovered in 627 A.D. Heraclius returned to Constantinople, where he had a great triumph, in which his chariot was drawn by four elephants. The next year he made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to restore the true Cross to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

With his head and feet bare, and dressed in a pilgrim's rough tunic, the Emperor carried the holy relic into the city through the "Golden Gate," the gate through which our Lord entered the Temple area on the first Palm Sunday. "Holy Cross Day," the 14th of September, became a Church festival both in the east and the west in memory of

the return of the Cross to Jerusalem. It was first called the "Exaltation of the Cross," and the old English name was the "Holy Rood of September."

Coins belonging to Chosroës, which have been buried since his conquest, are sometimes dug up in Palestine even now. The Christian buildings in Jerusalem were restored, but Heraclius ordered many Jews to be killed because they had joined the Persian king, and they were again forbidden to live in the Holy City.

Within a few years Palestine was conquered yet once more, an event which led to a new religion being established in the country, which was neither Jewish nor Christian, though it had in it great parts of both those faiths. It was a most important change, the consequences of which have lasted until the present time, and we must try to learn something about it, if we wish to understand the history of Palestine during the last twelve hundred years.

The Romans were attacked by an army of Arabians under a Caliph named Omar. These Arabians were Mohammedans, that is, they followed the teaching of a man named Mohammed, who died just about this time, in the year 632. It was probably from their country that the Queen of Sheba came when she visited King Solomon.

They had a sacred city—Mecca—which meant to them what Jerusalem did to the Jews and Christians. There was a temple in Mecca built over a sacred stone, which the Arabians believed to have been dropped from Heaven when Adam was turned out of Paradise. It was then pure white, but now, for it is there still, it is almost black, worn and broken, and held together with silver bands.

In the year 570, Mohammed was born at Medina, another city in Arabia. He was said to have exclaimed as soon as he was born, "Allah is great! There is no god but Allah, and I am his prophet!" "Allah" was the Arabian name for God, and means "worthy to be adored."

Mohammed, when he grew up, got his living as a camel-driver in the desert, conducting caravans from place to place. At one time he was also a shepherd, but he was always thinking a great deal about God, and longing for his people to worship Him alone. When he was forty years old, he believed that the archangel Gabriel appeared to him in the night, and called him to be a prophet of God, sending him out to preach that there was only one God, instead of the 365 different gods who had been worshipped at Mecca.

For the next twenty-four years, he was always preaching, teaching, and fighting for

his new religion. It was called "Islam," which means "submission," and the creed was the sentence Mohammed had said as a new-born baby. "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet."

You must not think that the Mohammedan religion is heathen. A very great deal of it is true, and, like the Jews, they worship God the Father but not our Lord Jesus Christ. Mohammed taught that there were six great prophets: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, "Issa" (the Arabian name for "Jesus"), and himself. They believe in the angels, the resurrection, judgment, and eternal life, and they have a sacred book called the "Koran," a great deal of which is taken from the Bible.

In the year 622 A.D. Mohammed and some companions left Mecca and went to Medina, which then became the chief Mohammedan city. This year is called the "Hejira," which means "flight," and to the Mohammedans it is the year one. They date from it in the same way that we date from A.D. 1.

When Mohammed died in 632 A.D., he was succeeded as ruler of the Mohammedans by a Caliph named Abu Bekr, but he only lived a short time, and was followed by a Caliph named Omar.

Omar invaded Palestine and Syria, conquering both in a very short time. He sent

his lieutenant Amr to Palestine to attack Jaffa, Gaza, and other fortified places that might have defended Jerusalem. They were taken, and the Arabian or Saracen army was soon before the Holy City. The Roman governor fled, leaving the Christian patriarch Sophronius in command of the garrison. After the siege had lasted for four months Sophronius offered to surrender on condition that the Caliph Omar came to receive the city in person.

Omar was at Medina at that time. He agreed to the Patriarch's condition, and travelled to Jerusalem in the simplest way, riding on a red camel, which carried two rough bags of parched corn and dates, a water-skin, and a wooden plate. When he reached Jerusalem, the patriarch met him outside the walls, and accepted his conditions of peace.

No more Christian Churches were to be built, but those already in the city were to be respected, though the bells were not to be rung, nor any crosses set up. The Jews were to wear different clothes from Mohammedans, and were not allowed to speak Arabic, nor sell wine, nor carry any arms. When the terms were settled Omar and Sophronius went into Jerusalem together, and the patriarch showed the Caliph all the famous sites.

Jerusalem was a holy city to Omar because

Mohammed was said to have been carried there in the night by the Angel Gabriel on a miraculous horse called El-Burâk, and allowed to ascend and see the wonders of Heaven. It was a sacred place too, because of its connection with the Old Testament saints and with Jesus Christ, who were regarded as prophets.

Omar found the site of Solomon's Temple covered with filth, thrown there by the Christians to show their contempt for the Jews. He ordered the ground to be cleared and prepared for the building of a mosque, as the Mohammedan places of prayer are called. The Christian Church of S. Mary, which the Emperor Justinian had built, was partly in ruins since the siege by the Persians. It was made into a mosque, and named " El-Aksar," which means the " most distant " from Mecca.

Omar was assassinated a few years after he became master of Jerusalem, and with his last breath begged his successor to be true to his agreement with the Jews and Christians. One of the Caliphs who followed him built in the Mohammedan year 72, which we should call A.D. 694, one of the most beautiful buildings in the world, on the site of the Temple at Jerusalem—the famous " Dome of the Rock." It is often, but wrongly, called the " Mosque of Omar."

Next to the mosque over the white stone at Mecca, this is the most sacred to Mohammedans. It is also built over a rock, on which probably the great altar of Solomon's Temple stood, and on which tradition said that Abraham had offered his son Isaac to God. From this rock, the Mohammedans believed that Mohammed ascended into Heaven on his wonderful horse.

For many centuries no Christian was ever allowed to enter the Dome of the Rock, and the Jews would not enter it for fear of treading upon the place where the "Holy of Holies" had stood. Up to the time of the war, Christian parties had to be accompanied by Turkish soldiers to ensure their safety, and no-one might wear boots inside the building.

There is an inscription from the Koran, in gold letters on lovely blue tiles inside the mosque, which denies that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, but says that He rose again from the dead. The appearance of the "Dome of the Rock" outside is familiar to everyone who has seen a picture postcard, or a drawing of Jerusalem. It stands out above the surrounding buildings just as the Dome of S. Paul's Cathedral does over the city of London.

From the time when the Mohammedans conquered Palestine the old Bible names of

places were changed for Arabian names, by which most of them are still called. Jerusalem is "El-Kuds," which means "The Sanctuary"; Nazareth is "En-Nasira"; Bethlehem is "Bêt Lahm," and Hebron is "El-Khalîl," the "town of the friend of God," because it was the burial-place of Abraham.

The Caliphs who followed Omar were Othman, Ali, and Hassan. These were followed by fourteen Caliphs called "Omayyads." Abd el-Malek, who built the Dome of the Rock, was the fifth of the "Omayyads." They ruled until the year 750 A.D., when they were followed by a long succession of Caliphs called "Abbasids" until 1258 A.D.

The most famous Abbasid Caliph was Harun al-Rashid, who reigned from 786 to 809 A.D. His name is familiar to everyone, even to children, because of the well-known collection of stories of his time in the "Arabian Nights," but perhaps we have hardly realised when we read of Sinbad the Sailor, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, or Aladdin and his wonderful Lamp, or see them represented in our Christmas pantomimes, how very old these characters really are and that they came to us all the way from Baghdad. Many of the Abbasid Caliphs were splendid rulers and noble men; Harun al-Rashid was one of the best of them.

The Arabs became more and more powerful

as years went on, not only in the East, but in Europe, especially in Spain and in North Africa. At first they treated the Christians in Palestine well, ruling with fairness and allowing them to practice their religion undisturbed. More than once the patriarchs of Jerusalem added buildings to the Holy Sepulchre without hindrance, and rebuilt parts of it which were destroyed by fires. The Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem was also left in Christian hands uninjured.

This peaceful state, however, only lasted for about 400 years. Almost the whole Christian world believed that Christ would come again in the year 1000 A.D. Pilgrims crowded from all countries to Palestine to wait there for His Second Coming. The pilgrimages still went on after that year was past, and very soon the Mohammedans began to tax the pilgrims, which was bitterly resented.

About this time a horde of wandering tribes from Turkestan in Central Asia, who called themselves Seljuks, wanting to find pastures for their enormous herds, overran Persia, Syria, and Palestine. They conquered the Caliph, and their leader announced that he was the Caliph of the whole Mohammedan world, though he did not belong to the religion of Islam himself. His successor did become a Mohammedan, and the third

Seljuk Caliph captured Jerusalem in the year 1094 A.D.

A bad time for the Christian population of the Holy City followed his victory. Pilgrims were robbed and ill-treated ; money was extorted from them on every pretence ; and the holy places were desecrated. News of this state of things spread to Europe, and led to the long series of wars called the Crusades, which we must think about in the next chapter.

The Arabs were a very clever and civilised people, great writers, scientists, and builders. They discovered the compass, paper, and gunpowder, were musicians, poets, and astronomers, and had a very great influence in every country in which they settled.

CHAPTER XIII

The Latin Kingdom and the Crusades

At the time when the Seljuk Turks were persecuting and ill-treating the Christians who came to worship at the Holy Places where Christ had lived and died, the rage for pilgrimages was greater than ever. All kinds of people, Emperors and kings, Bishops and priests, nobles and merchants, labourers and slaves, women, and even children, left their homes in Christian lands to go. Some went because they believed it would win Heaven; others were sent as a punishment for sin; many went because they wanted some holy "relic" for themselves or for their Church.

Just before William the Conqueror came to England, thousands of pilgrims went from France and Germany, numbers of whom lost their lives from hardship or were killed by Mohammedans. Ingulf, the Conqueror's secretary, with thirty horsemen fully armed, started on pilgrimage, but only twenty of them lived to return, on foot, with nothing left but a staff and a leather bag.

More reports came of the sufferings of pilgrims; every one who came back told fresh stories of the Turkish oppression, and described the condition of the Holy Places, especially the Holy Sepulchre. At last the Greek Emperor Alexis sent out an appeal to all Christian lands, to send armies against the Turks, and drive them out of Palestine. This aroused the whole of Europe, and very soon the Pope, Urban the Second, called a Council to arrange for the first Crusade.

One of the principal speakers at this Council, which was held at Clermont in France, was a soldier pilgrim who had returned from Jerusalem, named Peter the Hermit. He had worshipped at all the Holy Places, and seen the sufferings of the Christians, and Simeon, the patriarch of Jerusalem, had told him that God would send "the Christians of the West" to help the Holy City. Peter believed that he had heard the Voice of Christ, telling him to go back and call them, for the time had come. He went about France and Italy and Germany, rousing great enthusiasm, and when he made his famous speech at the Council, the whole multitude of people shouted "It is the Will of God!" Red Crosses were distributed to all who were willing to go, and in 1096, the Crusade started. It was led by ten Christian knights, one of whom was

Robert of Normandy, the brother of William Rufus, the king of England. Peter the Hermit, and another wild soldier named Walter the Penniless, also went with the host.

There were nine Crusades, during the next two hundred years, but this first one was the most successful of all. The Crusaders reached Jerusalem at the beginning of June in the year 1099, three years after they started. For forty days they besieged the city and could not take it. At last, the old chronicles say, a knight in glistening armour was seen standing on the Mount of Olives, waving his sword. "It is S. George the Martyr!" exclaimed Godfrey of Bouillon, one of the Christian leaders, and at his words the Crusaders made such a determined attack that the city was taken. When the English Crusaders reached their own land again, S. George became the patron saint of England instead of Edward the Confessor.

It was 3.0 o'clock on Friday when the city was taken, the hour of Christ's Death. The Crusaders who had come in His Name forgot the mercy He taught, for they massacred 70,000 Mohammedans and burnt great numbers of Jews in their synagogues. It was 460 years since the Caliph Omar had conquered Jerusalem, and turned the Church of S. Mary into a mosque. The Cross was placed over it and over the Dome of the Rock, now the

Holy City was in Christian hands once more, and the first thing the Crusaders did was to choose a king, and make Palestine a Christian kingdom.

Godfrey of Bouillon was chosen by the whole army, but he would not take a kingly crown in the place where Christ had worn one made of thorns; he called himself "Baron and Defender of the Holy Sepulchre," but he was actually the first king of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, as it is called. The Crusaders were known as "Latins" which meant those in communion with the Latin or Roman Church, or "Franks," which meant Frenchmen, most of them belonging to that nation. Godfrey's sword and spurs are still in the part of the Holy Sepulchre Church which belongs to the Roman Catholics. He was a brave and devout knight, who made just and true laws for all the different peoples living in his kingdom.

Two other leaders of this first Crusade were also made kings of Christian "counties," as they were called, in Syria—Edessa and Antioch, and a few years later Tripolis was also a Christian "county."

Unhappily Godfrey died of fever in less than a year. He was succeeded by his brother Baldwin, also a brave and good king. S. Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote to Baldwin, telling him so to rule

Jerusalem on earth that he might be worthy to reign in Jerusalem the Golden. When he died another Baldwin, his cousin, succeeded him.

During the reigns of these first Latin kings of Jerusalem, two great Military Orders were founded—the Knights of the "Hospital of S. John of Jerusalem" in Godfrey's reign, and the Knights of the "Temple" while Baldwin the 1st was king. The "Hospitallers" cared for the sick and wounded, and their order is still in existence in the form of "S. John Ambulance Society." The Order was divided into knights, priests, and serving-brothers. They wore black or red surcoats with a white cross.

The "Templars" wore white mantles with a red Cross. They were pledged to fight for the Holy Sepulchre and to protect Christian pilgrims who visited it. Later on, they had a great house in London, to which the famous round "Temple" Church belonged. Its priest is still called the "Master of the Temple," which was the old name for the head of the Order. Both the Hospitallers and the Templars took exactly the same vows as monks and nuns.

Baldwin the Second had no son, so he was succeeded by a French son-in-law named Fulk, who was accidentally killed thirteen years afterwards, and succeeded by his boy son Baldwin the Third.

While this king reigned a famous monk named Bernard of Clairvaux stirred up Europe to send another crusading army to Palestine. This second Crusade failed entirely, and the Christians were defeated by the Caliph Nûr-ed-Dîn, a fine soldier and devout Mohammedan, who always collected the dust that settled on his clothes in his battles with the Crusaders in a sack, which was to be placed under his head when he died.

Another son of Fulk named Almeric followed his brother. Nûr-ed-Dîn was at war with the Sultan of Egypt, who claimed to be descended from Fatima, the prophet Mohammed's youngest daughter. He made an alliance with King Almeric, who sent a Christian army to help him. Almeric, however, was defeated by Nûr-ed-Dîn's general, and it was agreed that both the armies should leave Egypt. Soon afterwards, however, Almeric was in Egypt again, this time fighting against the Fatimite Sultan, who appealed to Nûr-ed-Dîn to help him against the Christian king. Nûr-ed-Dîn sent his general Shirkuh, who defeated Almeric, and in gratitude the Sultan made Shirkuh his Grand Vizier, what we should call Prime Minister. Shirkuh soon died, however, and his nephew became Grand Vizier.

We have all heard of this nephew, for he was the famous Saladin, one of the bravest

and noblest of Mohammedan rulers. After a few years, he became Sultan of Egypt himself, and in 1175 he also succeeded Nûr-ed-Dîn, and was the head of the whole Mohammedan world.

Almeric had one little son named Baldwin, who was sent, when he was nine years old, to William the Archbishop of Tyre, to be educated. The Archbishop noticed that Baldwin did not use his right arm properly and discovered that he had that terrible and incurable eastern disease of leprosy. He was made king of Jerusalem when Almeric died, but he soon became so much worse that he was obliged to resign the throne to the baby son of his sister Sybilla, another Baldwin, the Fifth. This little boy died in three years, and his mother Sybilla and his step-father, a knight called Guy of Lusignan, ruled over the kingdom together.

All the Latin kings to little Baldwin the Fifth are buried on Calvary in the Holy Sepulchre Church.

On the caravan route from Syria to Egypt and Arabia there was a strong castle called Kerak, which at this time was governed by a Crusader named Rainald de Chatillon. Saladin hated him because he had attacked a caravan in a time of truce and tried to take Medina, Mohammed's burial-place. Rainald's

castle still remains and, before the war, was used as a Turkish barracks.

Rainald joined King Guy's army, which, with the Templars and the Knights of S. John, was camped in Galilee at a place called Saffûriyeh, where the Blessed Virgin Mary was said to have been born. The patriarch brought the True Cross from Jerusalem, and soon 50,000 Christians were ready to meet Saladin. The Saracens were at a place called Hattîn, where there was a saddle-shaped hill on which our Lord was said to have preached the Sermon on the Mount.

Between the two armies there was a plain without either trees or water, and it was the 1st of July, 1187. The Christian army, wearing heavy armour, marched across the plain in the blazing sunshine, and arrived at Hattîn exhausted. The Saracens set fire to the dry grass and huge thistles all round, and the smoke made the thirst of the Crusaders worse. The next day they were completely defeated, King Guy and the other leaders, except one named Raymond, were taken prisoners, and the Cross was lost.

Saladin treated Guy with courtesy, but he himself cut off Rainald of Chatillon's head, and ordered his soldiers to kill the Knights of the Hospital and the Temple, because they were priests as well as soldiers. About two

months afterwards Saladin took Jerusalem, and it became a Mohammedan city again. The big Cross was torn down from the Dome of the Rock and the Church of S. Mary; they were cleansed with quantities of rose-water, a beautiful wooden pulpit was brought from Damascus, which is still in the Dome, and Saladin's name is still carved on the walls. Richard Coeur de Lion of England gave Saladin 52,000 pieces of gold for all the Christian ornaments of the Churches, so they were not destroyed.

The success of the Saracens led to the Third, and perhaps the most famous Crusade, in which Richard of England, Philip of France, and Frederick of Germany took part. We all know Sir Walter Scott's wonderful story of the "Talisman," the scenes in which are laid in the time of this Crusade. At first it was successful, and Acre was conquered. Then Frederick died, and Philip went home, leaving the English king to fight on alone. He made a truce with Saladin by which pilgrims were to be allowed to visit Jerusalem in safety, but he himself would not even look at the Holy City from a distance because he could not conquer it. Perhaps he would have succeeded if the French king had not been so jealous that he was "like a cat with a hammer tied to its tail."

The 4th and 5th Crusades were failures,

but the 6th was more successful. It was led by the Emperor Frederick the Second of Germany. At this time, 1228 A.D., the reigning Sultan was Malik al-Kamil. Without fighting, he and Frederick made a treaty, in which Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jaffa were given up to the Christians. Mohammedans were still to have the Dome of the Rock, and worship there, and Christians might use it too.

This might have led to peace in Palestine, but Frederick, before he left Europe, had offended Pope Gregory the 9th, and been excommunicated, so the Christians in Jerusalem would have nothing to do with him. When he went to the Holy Sepulchre Church to be crowned, not one of the clergy was present. He had to take the crown from the altar, and put it on himself. No service was held, and the bells of all the Churches were silent.

Ten years later the 7th Crusade was led by an Englishman named Richard of Cornwall. The Sultan Kamil was dead, and his sons had broken the treaty with Frederick, and retaken Jerusalem and the other Christian places. Richard succeeded in winning them all back again. For two years there was none but Christian worship in Jerusalem, and nearly the whole country was in Christian hands.

A new enemy altogether swept into Palestine at the end of the two years, Kharezmians from Central Asia. They were absolute savages, and when they succeeded in taking Jerusalem, they massacred Christians and Mohammedans alike, and even dug up the bodies of the dead. The military knights of the Temple and Hospital joined the Mohammedans from Syria in the war against them, but they were so terribly defeated that only 33 Templars and 16 Hospitallers were left. Soon afterwards, however, the Egyptian and Syrian Mohammedans succeeded in driving these wild barbarians out of the country again, but for a long time there was a prayer in the Christian Services, "From the fury of the Tartars, Good Lord deliver us."

After this invasion the condition of the Christians in Palestine was so miserable that another Crusade, the Eighth, set out from Europe to make one more attempt to conquer the country. Of this Crusade we have the most delightful account written by a knight named John de Joinville, who took part in it himself under the leader King Louis the Ninth of France. Louis was a saint and a hero, who lived like a monk in strict self-denial, never told a lie, or swore, or broke his word, and made the worship and service of God his first study.

This "most Christian King," as he well

deserved to be called, was in Syria and Palestine for four years. Joinville's account of the time is full of all kinds of adventures, and he tells of a secret society called the "Assassins" under a chief called "The Old Man of the Mountain," of battles and single combats, of "Greek fire" and shipwrecks, lion hunts and treasure seeking. At the end of his book he tells his readers that they must believe all he says he *saw*, but may please themselves about what he says he *heard*.

King Louis fortified Acre and Jaffa, and went on a pilgrimage to Nazareth, dressed in sackcloth. At the end of the four years he made a truce with the Sultan, who gave him permission to visit Jerusalem, but, like Richard Coeur de Lion, he refused, and returned to France without seeing the Holy City, in 1254. Sixteen years later, he took the Cross again, and the 9th and last Crusade set out in 1270. Louis died on the way and the chief leader after his death was Prince Edward of England, afterwards King Edward the First.

With 7,000 men he conquered Nazareth, but was soon afterwards stabbed by a hired assassin at Acre. On his recovery he made a truce for ten years, ten months, and ten days, with the Sultan, a brave man named Bibars, and sailed for England.

This was in 1272. Fighting went on

between Christians and Mohammedans until Acre was the only town left in Christian hands. This was taken, after a terrible siege, in 1291, and Palestine has been a Mohammedan land ever since until the victory of the Allied forces under General Allenby in 1917.

In the years between the 5th and 6th Crusade, 50,000 French and German children were taught by wild and foolish preachers that it was their duty to go to Palestine and rescue the Holy Sepulchre. Shouting "Lord Jesus, give us back Thy Cross," the boys and girls set out; the old chronicle says "no bolts, no bars, no fear of fathers, no love of mothers, could hold them back." Hundreds of them died on the way, but they still went on till they reached Genoa, where they expected to find the sea dried up for them. Some wicked merchants offered to take them free of charge to Palestine in their ships. Two of the vessels were wrecked; the other five sailed to Egypt, where the children were sold as slaves.

There are many ruins of Frank castles and Churches in Palestine. One famous Church is at Samaria, where the traditional tomb of S. John the Baptist is shown in the crypt.

The times of the Crusades are very difficult to remember, because of the constant changes, so perhaps we had better have two tables,

one of the Crusades and the other of the Latin Kings of Jerusalem, to help us to keep the story clear.

THE CRUSADES.

I.	1096.	Leaders. Godfrey of Bouillon, and nine other nobles.
II.	1147.	Louis VII. of France, and the Emperor Conrad of Germany.
III.	1189.	Richard I. of England. Philip Augustus of France. Frederick I. of Germany.
IV.	1195.	German nobles.
V.	1201.	French and Flemish Counts.
VI.	1217.	The Emperor Frederick II. of Germany.
VII.	1239.	Richard of Cornwall.
VIII.	1248.	Louis IX. of France.
IX.	1270.	Louis IX. of France and Prince Edward of England.

THE LATIN KINGS OF JERUSALEM.

Godfrey of Bouillon.
Baldwin I.
Baldwin II.
Fulk (Son-in-law of Baldwin II.)
Baldwin III.
Almeric (Brother of Baldwin III.).
Baldwin IV.
Baldwin V. (Son of Sybilla, sister of Baldwin IV.).
Sybilla and Guy de Lusignan.
Isabella (Sister of Sybilla. She married :—
(I.) Conrad of Montserrat.
(II.) Henry of Champagne.
(III.) Almeric de Lusignan.
Mary (Daughter of Isabella) and John de Brienne.
Yolande (Daughter of Mary) married Frederick II. of Germany.

CHAPTER XIV

Since the Crusades

It was during the time of the Crusades, between the 5th and 6th, that S. Francis of Assisi founded the famous Order of Mendicant Friars, or Franciscans. One of the chief objects of this Order was the care of the Holy Places in Palestine, and the service of the pilgrims. The friars, dressed in "sacking blessedly patched" spread into all Christian countries, but Palestine always came first with them, and the head of their Order was called the "Guardian of the Holy Sepulchre." They soon had monasteries in many parts of the Holy Land, where pilgrims could stay, and many a poor traveller owed his very life to these "Friars Minor," as they were called, because S. Francis said they were to be "always less than the least." They have been in Palestine through all the centuries that have passed since the Crusades, and travellers still stay in their "hospices" or guest-houses at many of the holy places.

During the 13th century a regiment of slaves fought under the Saracen Sultans in Egypt and Palestine. They were called

" Mamelukes," which means " slaves." After a time they were so powerful in Egypt that their leaders became the Sultans. They were always magnificently dressed and mounted, their horses and themselves covered with rich jewels, and they were fearless fighters. Cairo was their capital city, and many of the splendid mosques and other buildings there were erected by the Mameluke Sultans.

After the Latins were finally driven out of Palestine the country was ruled by the Mamelukes until the year 1517. It was part of the Egyptian kingdom. In that year, the Turkish Sultan, Selim the First, invaded Egypt and defeated the Mamelukes, taking Cairo from them, and adding Syria and Palestine to the Turkish Empire. Since his time all Mohammedans have been united under one head, the Sultan of Turkey, who lives at Constantinople.

Suleiman the Magnificent, the Sultan who succeeded Selim, built the wall that still surrounds Jerusalem. It is 38 feet high, and has thirty-four towers and eight gates, one of which, the " Golden Gate " (see Chapter xii) is walled up, because the Mohammedans had a tradition that a Christian conqueror would ride through it one day, and take the City out of their hands.

From the time when Selim conquered Palestine, which was while Henry the Eighth

was ruling in England, nothing very important happened in the history of the country until the year 1799, when Napoleon Buonaparte was at war with Turkey.

This great but unscrupulous general made up his mind to conquer Palestine, and led a French army across the desert from Egypt. He took the old Philistine town of Gaza, and marched up the coast to Jaffa, which he besieged. There were strong walls round the town and a brave garrison inside them, determined to resist him to the last.

After the siege had lasted some days, one of Napoleon's officers promised the defenders that their lives should be spared if they surrendered. They gave up the town, but Napoleon was very angry when he saw how many prisoners he had taken. His own troops were short of food, and, after considering for three days, he ordered the prisoners to be taken down to the sea shore and shot. Everyone who has read about tours in the Holy Land knows what a dangerous harbour there is at Jaffa. It is full of rocks, and when there is any wind, it is almost impossible for a boat to go in or out.

Some of the prisoners threw themselves into the sea and got on to the rocks. Again the French soldiers promised them their lives, but only with the same treachery, for they shot them all when they surrendered.

Napoleon marched on up the coast till he came to Acre, the famous town which had so often been the headquarters of the Crusaders, called " Ptolemais " in the Bible. Acre was governed by a man who had been an Albanian slave in Egypt. His name was El Jazzar, which means the " Butcher," and he well deserved it, for he was a cruel and merciless man, but he defended Acre well. An English naval force under Sir Sydney Smith was sent to help him, and they landed cannon with sailors to work them.

Napoleon sent part of his army into Galilee, and took Tiberias and Nazareth, but he could not conquer Acre, although the siege lasted for more than two months. He was obliged to march back to Egypt, and leave Palestine and Syria alone.

In 1832, Mohammed Ali, the Pasha or " viceroy " of Egypt, tried to take Syria and Palestine from the Sultan, and succeeded. It belonged to Egypt for seven years, and then the European nations insisted on its being restored to Turkey. An English fleet under Sir Charles Napier went out to the Syrian and Egyptian coasts, and after Alexandria had been bombarded, Mohammed Ali submitted and Syria became Turkish again.

French soldiers had to be sent to Syria in the year 1860 to compel the Turkish government to punish the ringleaders of a

terrible rising against the Roman Catholic Christians in the country. 6,000 of them had been massacred in Damascus, and 8,000 in other places, chiefly in the Lebanon mountains, where there are two races of people who have been bitter enemies for centuries—the Druses and the Maronites.

The Druses are half-Syrian, half-Arabian. They have a religion which, so far as anyone knows, for it is kept very secret, is much like Mohammedanism ; they will not mix with any other race.

The Maronites are Christians in communion with the Church of Rome. Both races are fine soldiers, and many of them have most lovely faces. A Druse sheik, in full dress, on horseback is a splendid picture. The French troops remained in Syria until peace was made between these warlike races. Many of the Druses went to live in the country on the east side of the Jordan. The Lebanon district was made into a separate province of which the governor must always be a Christian.

Syria and Palestine remained part of the Turkish Empire until the great war which began in 1914, and ended happily in victory for England and France and their Allies. The story of how, after four hundred years, the Land, where Jesus Christ lived and died and rose again, came once more into Christian

hands is one which Christians will always remember with joy and thanksgiving. English troops had the greatest share in the work, and it was an English Commander-in-chief, Sir Edmund Allenby, who led them, and their allies, to complete and final victory.

Only those who know the country can have the least idea of the difficulties the soldiers had to face. They started from Egypt, as Napoleon did in 1779, and crossed the Sinai desert, where there was no water supply. The Army laid a railway and water-pipes from the Suez Canal as it went on for 147 miles ; the water was carried to the places where it was needed in trains of water-trucks, stored in canvas reservoirs, and distributed in tanks carried by camels, to a quarter of a million men and 100,000 animals.

In the autumn of 1917 the British army was close to the borders of Palestine. The Turks, with their German allies, held the country between Gaza and Beersheba ; if you will look at the map, you will see where those places are, and how they had to be taken from the Turks before the British forces could march towards Jerusalem. Beersheba was especially important because it had seventeen wells of good water, which had been known ever since the time of Abraham. It was captured on the last day of October, and we conquered Gaza a week later.

Still following Napoleon's line, our army fought its way up the coast until it reached and conquered Jaffa, the port of Jerusalem.

A month later, the Turkish governor of Jerusalem wrote a letter surrendering the city to the British army, and gave it to the Mayor to deliver, he himself fleeing away in the darkness along the Jericho road in an American resident's cart. The Mayor went out with white flags, and met some English soldiers on a hill outside the city, to whom he gave the letter, and two days later Sir Edmund Allenby made his formal entry into the Holy City, through the Jaffa Gate.

We can all remember the thrill of joy that seemed to run through the whole Christian world when the glorious news was known. It is especially interesting to us to know that the Turkish Governor signed the letter of surrender on the study table in the English Bishop's house, close to our Cathedral of S. George, outside the Damascus Gate.

During the following months the British Army moved gradually northwards, making railways and roads, building bridges and providing water supplies as they cleared the country of the Turks. In the old chronicle of the Crusade in which Richard Coeur-de-Lion took part, we can read how the soldiers were troubled by the mosquitoes, which swarm in Palestine wherever there is marshy

ground. Our forces found the same difficulty as they went up the country, and a great deal of drainage had to be done. Much mischief to roads and bridges and wells done by the Turks as they retreated had to be repaired, but the work went steadily on. Many battles were fought, and victories gained.

Nazareth was taken in September 1918, and by the end of the month Damascus, the capital city of Syria, was reached. Six weeks later, on November the 11th, the Armistice was signed and fighting in Palestine and Syria, as everywhere else, came to an end.

Since the war ended France has been governing Syria and the land east of the River Jordan, and Palestine itself has been under English rule.

It is indeed a sacred trust for us, for the Holy Land is not like any other country ; it is a trust for the whole world, for Jews and Mohammedans as well as for Christians, for eastern and western nations alike. Let us pray that a wise and powerful Christian government may put an end to the long story of strife and bloodshed in that most sacred of all lands, and that Jerusalem may be a centre of spiritual life for all Christ's Church on earth.

The conquest of Palestine must make a great difference to the civilisation of the country. Until the war, there were hardly

any roads in the modern sense of the word, and none at all in a great part of it. Bridle-paths, often dangerous and difficult, led from one district to another, much as they had done a thousand years before. A few years ago, there was only a single narrow gauge railway, with one train a day each way, between Jaffa and Jerusalem. Another railway ran from Haifa to Damascus, with two trains a week.

Caravans still went about with goods as they did in Bible times ; camels, horses, and donkeys were used for transport, and there was none of the hurried busy life of western lands. Eastern people change very slowly, and that is why, before the war, the country had altered so little that Bible descriptions, even those in the Old Testament, were still quite correct. Ways of travelling, buying and selling, social and domestic life, manners and customs, had changed but little since the earliest times. This was one reason why visits to the Holy Land were so fascinating ; it was like living in Bible times.

There must be changes now, but whatever difference the war may have made in Palestine, it will never cease to be the holiest land in the world, because of the Life of the Incarnate Son of God. He loved it dearly, and for His sake we must love it too.

CHAPTER XV

The Geography of the Holy Land

We have thought of the wonderful history of the Holy Land and its people. Now we must try to learn something of the geography of the country, which is very curious and most interesting, and quite unlike that of any other country in the world.

The name "Palestine" is only a form of "Philistine," the name of the people who lived on the south coast (see Chapter iii). In the Bible it is called by the names of the different parts, or people, or by some poetical or spiritual name. "The land of Israel"; "the Land of Judah"; the "Land of Canaan"; "the Land that floweth with milk and honey"—those are some of the names we find in the Old Testament. In the New Testament it is called Judaea. The "Holy Land" is, of course, only the Christian name for the country in which our Lord was born and died and rose again.

In the Bible where the whole country that is now called Palestine is meant, the expression "from Dan to Beersheba" is used, because Dan is on the northern boundary between Palestine and Syria, and Beersheba

on the southern, between Palestine and Egypt. The Mediterranean Sea is the boundary on the west, and the desert of Arabia on the east ; the river Litany on the north, and a deep valley through which a stream runs, called in the Bible the " river of Egypt," on the south. Keep a map by you while you read this chapter ; it will make it much more easy to understand and remember the Holy Land geography.

From Dan to Beersheba is about 140 miles, the same distance as from King's Cross to Retford, and from the sea to the desert in the widest part is about 80 miles, about the same as from Victoria to Dover. What makes the geography of Palestine so very interesting is that this small space of ground, which in England could be covered by an express train in two hours and one hour, has in it nearly all the climates in the world, from very cold to tropical heat. The cedars and firs of a cold climate and the bananas and palms of the tropics grow within twenty miles of each other ; let us try to understand how this can be.

Palestine can be divided into four long lines running side by side from north to south. On the west there is a long line of flat ground, on the Mediterranean coast. The northern part is called the Plain of Sharon, and the southern, the Philistine plain.

Then there is a range of mountains running down the centre of the country from Dan to Beersheba.

Next to that comes one of the most remarkable natural places in the world, the Jordan Valley, which we must especially study.

The last line on the east is another range of mountains, with flat tops, between the Jordan Valley and the desert. Look at the map and see how these four lines run from north to south in this order :—

PLAIN.—MOUNTAINS.—JORDAN VALLEY.—MOUNTAINS.

The " Maritime Plain," that is, the plain on the sea-coast, is broken in the middle by a branch of the hills which ends in Mount Carmel, so famous in the Bible story of Elijah. Many travellers to Palestine land at the foot of Carmel, because Haifa, the town just below it, has a harbour which is much safer than the one at Jaffa, and is the terminus of the railway from Damascus. There are many small streams which water the plain country, but some of them dry up in summer.

Part of the land is marshy, and part wild moorland, and a great part of it is very lonely, without settled villages, but often the wandering tribes of Bedouins lead their huge flocks of sheep and goats over its

pastures. Further south, in the district round Jaffa, the soil is marvellously fertile, and the climate warm enough to grow vines, oranges, palms, and pomegranates. In spring the plains are sheets of wild-flowers, more than 3,000 kinds, but the wild-flowers of Palestine are the garden-flowers of England. Tulips, narcissi, cyclamen, anemones, scarlet, purple and white, rock-roses, violets, and lilies are everywhere. No one who has not seen the Holy Land in spring can have any true idea of its wealth of flower beauty.

Travellers who land at Jaffa and go on to Jerusalem by road or train pass through the great groves of magnificent orange trees, the fruit of which is sent all over the world, and which is a great boon in a country where the water is so often unfit to drink.

The Philistine Plain is partly pasture and corn land, partly sand dunes, and partly low hills called the "Shephelah," translated "low-lands" in the Revised Version of the Bible. Gezer, the town where the excavations are so interesting (see Chapter ii) is in the Shepelah, and Lachish (see Chapter i) is just at the foot of the hills. Many of the places mentioned in the reigns of Saul and David, during the wars with the Philistines, are in this district, but some of them are now only mud villages with hedges of cactus to separate them from the country round.

Now let us think a little about the line of mountains that runs down the centre of the country. It begins outside Palestine, in Syria, in the Lebanon district, and is a great mass of mountains, the highest point of which is Mount Hermon. When you sing the verse in the 26th Psalm about "Libanus and Sirion," perhaps you do not know that "Sirion" is Mount Hermon—it was the Phoenician name for it.

Mount Hermon is nearly 10,000 feet high, and is always covered with snow. Its topmost cone, like a white sugar-loaf, comes into sight, as Palestine is approached by sea, long before the coast can be seen, and it can be seen from the greater part of the country. The Arabs call it the "Prince Mountain."

Palestine is divided into Galilee, Samaria, and Judaea, and the mountain range runs through them all, but in Galilee there is a break in the hills. This is called the Plain of Esdraelon, and it has perhaps had more battles fought on its soil than any other place in the world. Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Saul, Josiah, Saladin, Napoleon, all fought on this plain.

Samaria is almost all mountains, with some lower hills, and occasional spaces of level ground amongst them. When travellers are riding down the country, the dragomans often tell them, as they pass through this

part of the mountains, that they must get off their horses and "go one, one" because the paths are so precipitous and dangerous.

The hills of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Judah, carry the mountain line down to Hebron, after which it gets gradually lower, and slopes into a district called the "Negeb," which means "dry land"; the Bible name for it is the "south country." This district gradually ends in the desert. At some times in the history of Palestine it was a prosperous district, but it is now very desolate. The Bedouin tribes who live in it are famous for making cisterns in the hillsides to hold water.

The highest parts of this range of mountains are about 3,000 feet above sea-level. Most of the famous places in Bible history are in the hill country, including Jerusalem and Bethlehem, which are 2,610 and 2,704 feet above the sea. Hebron is higher still, over 3,000 feet.

The greater part of the hills is limestone, which, with the olive-groves, gives this part of Palestine a general grey appearance. Some parts are sandstone, some black volcanic lava, and the coast plains are chiefly gravel and sand, covered with rich soil. The Mount of Olives is very full of fossils.

Galilee is one of the most fertile parts of the land, especially on the Esdraelon plain, because the water drains down from the

Lebanon mountains. Even in the time of Josephus it was famous for its fruit, for he says in his book on the Jewish Wars that the district by the Sea of Galilee had "grapes and figs continually during ten months of the year, and the rest of the fruits, as they become ripe together, through the whole year."

There are more trees in Galilee than in most parts of Palestine—oaks, sycamores, and maples, and there are large olive orchards, and some vines, though not so many as we know there must have been in older times, from the number of ancient wine-presses in many parts.

There is one very fertile valley in the Samaria hill-country, the Vale of Shechem, between the two mountains called Ebal and Gerizim. It has twenty-two springs in it, half of which never dry up, and the vegetation is most luxuriant. Gerizim is the sacred mountain of the Samaritans, the only place where the Passover is still celebrated (see Chapter vi), and has the ruins of a Roman castle, a Christian Church, and many stone cisterns and platforms on the top. Mount Ebal on the other side of the valley is much more desolate. On the top there is a small Mohammedan tomb, which is said to contain the head of S. John, the Baptist. Both these hills have a magnificent view over almost the

whole of Palestine, and Shechem, the town between them, is one of the oldest cities in the world.

The hill country of Judaea is very stony and almost treeless in the higher parts. There is very little water, and the limestone is often close to the surface, with hardly any soil above it. The highest summits are between 2,500 and 3,000 feet above the sea. The western slopes are more fertile than the eastern, because they get the moisture from the sea breezes.

In one part the hills become a mixture of ridges with deep ravines between them, and on those ridges the City of Jerusalem is built. It was this position which made the Holy City so short of water, for there were only the springs in the valley outside the walls, and the only brook, the Kedron, dries up in summer. There are still huge cisterns under the Temple area to supply the city, one of which, called "The Great Sea," holds two million gallons.

Bethlehem also is on two high hills, but it is not so desolate a position as that of Jerusalem. The people are Christians and very industrious. They have many vineyards, and the famous fields in which David kept his sheep, and over which the first Christmas carol was sung.

South of Bethlehem the hill range gets

higher as far as Hebron, and there is still less water, making the district hardly better than desert in many parts.

Now we come to the third line down the country—the famous Jordan Valley. It is generally called the "Ghôr," the Arabic word for "hollow" or "bottom," and the name of the river is generally believed to come from a Hebrew word meaning the "descender."

This sacred stream runs right down the whole country from Caesarea Philippi, now called "Bâniyâs," to the Dead Sea in the extreme south. Bâniyâs is built on a steep cliff which has a large cave in it, from which a flood of water springs out and, soon being joined by two other streams from springs, becomes the river Jordan.

Geologists tell us that in the past ages, long before there was any human life on the earth, there was a great split in the limestone crust, which formed a long deep trench. Later on, this trench was filled with water, making a lake more than 100 miles long, and still later, this lake dried up, leaving only a river running down the trench, which widened out into small lakes in two places.

The first of the two lakes is called Hûleh, and the river when it reaches this part of the valley has already fallen nearly 1,200 feet, that is four times the height of S. Paul's

Cathedral. There are dense jungles and marshlands round the lake, and in them the papyrus plant, from which the ancient paper (see Chapter ii) was made, flourishes rankly. In the year 1869, a Scotchman named Macgregor paddled all the way down the Jordan in a canoe called the "Rob Roy," and wrote a book about it afterwards which told a great deal about this part of the river for the first time. The lake is about four miles long, and is shaped like a fat comma. Bedouin tribes live in the marshes, in houses made of papyrus, and keep many buffaloes.

In the next nine miles the Jordan falls another 700 feet, where it broadens into the other lake, the famous Sea of Galilee. It is nearly thirteen miles long and eight miles across in the widest part, and is the shape of a pear. Hills and steep cliffs surround it everywhere except in one place where there is a small flat plain, "the land of Gennesaret," and at the south end where the river runs out of it.

There is a narrow strip of beach covered with millions of the most exquisite little shells. The water is full of fish, some kinds of which are found nowhere else except in tropical lands. There is one that carries its young ones in its mouth, and another that makes a sound like a bell. Sir John Maundeville, who wrote an English book about

Palestine, in 1322, called the lake a " stank " of fresh water, and said it had in it " great plenty of good fish."

The ravines and gorges between the hills make this lake dangerous for boats because of the sudden force of the wind blowing through them, just as we read in the Gospel stories. In older times this must have been a volcanic region, for the cliffs are strewn with lava and pumice-stone, and there are hot springs just below Tiberias. Earthquakes are mentioned in the Bible and by Josephus, and occur sometimes still. There was a terrible one about 80 years ago, in which ten thousand people were killed.

The lake is 680 feet below sea-level, so the climate is very hot, and the vegetation very luxuriant, our hot-house flowers being in bloom in the open air in January.

From the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea is only 65 miles in a straight line, but the " Ghôr " twists about so much that the river runs 200 miles between the two, often through desert country, and always the valley gets deeper until it is 1,292 feet below sea level. There is no ground, uncovered by water, anywhere else in the world lower than 300 feet below sea level.

Between the two seas two other large streams, the Yarmuk and the Jabbok, run into the Jordan and help to make its waters

more rapid. In Old Testament times, the river was crossed by fords. When the Romans held the country they built bridges across, some of which still remain. There is dense jungle on the banks in this part, in which leopards, hyenas, jackals, and porcupines live, and the climate gets hotter and more unhealthy until the Dead Sea is reached, and the Jordan is lost in it.

Everyone has read and heard of this extraordinary water. It is never called the "Dead Sea" in the Bible, but the "Salt Sea" or the "Sea of the Plain." There is a mountain of pure rock salt, called Jebel Udsum, six miles long, which gradually melts into the lake, and makes its water five times as salt as the sea, and so buoyant that a swimmer cannot sink in it. Of course nothing can live in the water, or on the banks, which are covered with bleached branches of trees that have floated down the Jordan, and masses of sulphur. A curious plant like a withered sponge grows in the hot barren plains near the Dead Sea, which opens its flowers months or years after it is gathered, if it is placed in water. It is called the "Rose of Jericho," and is often brought home by travellers.

This marvellous Valley of the Jordan must always be most interesting to Christians because so much of our Lord's Human Life is connected with it. He was baptised in the

water of the river ; He preached and taught and lived on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and often sailed on its waters ; and He paid at least one visit to the district where the Jordan rises.

The fourth line down the Holy Land is another range of mountains on the eastern side of the Jordan Valley, covering ground from thirty to eighty miles across. It is a very volcanic region, with fields of lava, and many extinct volcanoes, and has most fertile soil, with large oak forests and enormous corn-fields and pasture lands.

This line is the district where the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh, were allowed to settle when Joshua had conquered the Holy Land (see Chapter iii), and the country of the Edomites and Moabites. It is from these hills that the Yarmuk and Jabbok flow down to the Jordan, and another stream called the Arnon into the Dead Sea.

In early Bible times there was a dense population on these hills, and also in Greek and Roman towns. There are quantities of stone relics like Stonehenge, and remains of castles, temples, churches, theatres and baths. Many inscriptions have been dug up, and some of the very earliest human habitations, when men lived in caves. No doubt there is a great deal yet to be discovered, in the years to come.

CHAPTER XVI

The People of Palestine

As we went through the history of Palestine from the earliest times that we know anything about, we perhaps found it difficult to remember the names of the different people who, at one time and another, have lived in the country. There are long lists in the Bible of different tribes and different nations, and history outside the Bible has many others. There are not only the eastern races, but also those of the various nations that conquered Palestine at different times, and settled in the country, until they were perhaps driven out by a stronger people.

We have thought how all these different inhabitants left ruins, pottery, inscriptions, coins, and other things in many parts of the country from which we have been able to learn a great deal of history, and hope to learn more. The cave-dwellings; the high-places; the subterranean cities; the temples, palaces, and fortifications; the Frank castles, the Christian Churches, and the Mohammedan mosques—they all have something to tell us of the people.

The Bible is much more a history of people than of places, although, of course, we learn

a great deal about the country from the Scriptures, especially from the Book of Joshua, which is the "geography" book of the Bible, and about Jerusalem from the Book of Nehemiah.

Palestine is not a densely populated country compared with our own land. In England we have 309 people to the square mile; Palestine has only about 62.

Though we meet people of almost every nation in the world in the Holy Land, very few of them are really inhabitants of the country. Great numbers of them are pilgrims who come to visit the holy places, both Christians and Mohammedans. Many are tourists from other lands, and others are traders bringing all kinds of merchandise.

15,000 pilgrims land every year at Jaffa alone, many at Haifa and Beyrout, and caravans from Egypt and other countries are always coming into the Holy Land.

The regular inhabitants of Palestine are Syrians, Arabs, Jews, Franks, and Turks. They are so unlike each other both in their faces and in their dress that they are easy to distinguish.

The Syrians are the descendants of the people who lived in Palestine side by side with the Jews when it was under the kings of Syria. They came to Syria from Babylon about 1,300 years before the time of Christ,

and their language, Aramaic, gradually spread to very large districts. In Palestine it became the common language of the people, instead of Hebrew, and was the language our Lord Himself and the Apostles usually spoke.

Some of the Syrians are Christians and some are Mohammedans. They speak Arabic now, but they have many books in the old Syriac language, especially some famous versions of the New Testament. One of these, which is in our British Museum, is the oldest *dated* copy of the Scriptures in existence. It was written by a deacon named John, in 646 A.D.

The Arabs are the descendants of the wandering desert tribes who came into Palestine from Arabia and other countries at different times. Some of them now live settled lives in the towns, but most of them are still "nomadic," or "wandering," as they were in Old Testament times. They are generally called "Bedouin," which means "dwellers in the desert." Some of these tribes live in Palestine all the year round, moving from place to place to find pasture for their flocks, and others are only there in summer, going to Arabia for the winter.

Anyone who visits an encampment of Bedouin Arabs will see exactly how Abraham used to live thousands of years ago. It is a village of tents, made of black goats' hair,

which is so greasy that it is waterproof. There are fireplaces in the tents, in which they burn brushwood, for there is no coal in Palestine. The tents are divided into two parts, for women and men.

These Arabs wear a white garment, with a black or coloured cloth bound round their heads with a cord of camels' hair, and a large heavy black cloak made of the same material. In the Jordan Valley they sometimes have their faces tattooed, and the women wear veils and a skirt so long that it is impossible to walk without tucking it up.

The wandering Bedouin have enormous flocks and herds of sheep and goats, and numerous camels, which they often decorate with blue beads. They live very simply, generally on bread, milk, and rice, with sometimes goatflesh or mutton. Travellers are generally treated with great hospitality, but the tribes are continually fighting with each other. They are very fond of songs, riddles, and stories, and have all kinds of superstitions and legends which they tell round their camp fires. It is strange to think that, before the days of writing, the early Bible history must have been handed down in this way from one generation to another.

Most of the settled peasants, who are called "fellahîn," a word meaning "tiller of the soil," are descendants of Egyptians,

Syrians, and Arabs. They speak a kind of Arabic, but the Bedouin in the Jordan Valley speak pure Arabic, and so do most of the better class people all over the country.

It is a curious language, with an alphabet of twenty-eight letters, and Europeans find it very difficult to learn. Perhaps you would like to see a verse of the Bible (S. John iii, 16) in the languages spoken by the Syrians and Arabs in Palestine, as it is printed for them by the Oxford University Press.

ܗܳܟܰܢܳܐ ܓܰܝܪ ܐܰܚܒ ܐܰܠܗܳܐ ܠܥܰܠܡܳܐ ܕܰܝܗܒ ܒܪܹܗ ܝܰܚܺܝܕܳܝܳܐ ܕܠܳܐ ܢܶܐܒܕ ܟܠ ܡܰܢ ܕܡܳܗܝܢ ܒܹܗ ܐܶܠܳܐ ܢܶܗܘܶܐ ܠܹܗ ܚܰܝܳܐ ܕܰܐܒܕܳܢܳܐ ׃

S. John iii, 16 in modern Syriac type.

لِأَنَّهُ هٰكَذَا أَحَبَّ ٱللّٰهُ ٱلْعَالَمَ حَتَّى بَذَلَ ٱبْنَهُ ٱلْوَحِيدَ لِكَيْ لَا يَهْلِكَ كُلُّ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ بَلْ تَكُونُ لَهُ ٱلْحَيٰوةُ ٱلْأَبَدِيَّةُ ۞

S. John iii, 16 in Arabic type.

(*Both types are used by permission of the Oxford University Press*).

Many of the names of places in Arabic tell something about them. All places beginning with "Beer" have a well; those beginning with "Ain" or "En" have a fountain or spring. "Jebel" means a mountain, and "Wâdy" is a valley.

The wandering Arabs are Mohammedans, but not so religious as the settled Arabs,

though they may often be seen saying their five daily prayers on a praying-mat, after washing their faces, feet, and hands with water when they can get it, and with sand when they are in the desert.

The Druses and Maronites (see Chapter xiv) are half-Syrian and half-Arabs. Their dress is very picturesque, and the women wear a curious head dress like the one we sometimes see in pictures of ladies' costumes in the time of Edward the Fourth—a long horn with a veil, in which they are said even to sleep, hanging from it.

Some of the Syrian inhabitants of the Holy Land have always been Christian from the time before the Mohammedan religion began. The Maronites are Christians, belonging to the Roman Catholic branch of the Church, but most of the native Christians belong to the Greek Church, which is the Church of Palestine.

There are some places in Palestine where the population is almost entirely Christian, and it is easy to see how much more prosperous they are than Mohammedan villages. Nazareth and Bethlehem are Christian, and the women of Bethlehem wear a most picturesque costume, which travellers often buy to bring home.

Most of the Jews now settled in Palestine are, as we have already thought, foreigners from other lands, but there are a few who

claim to be descendants of the Jews who lived there at the time of the Incarnation. They live in a Galilean village called Pekiin.

The Jews who came from eastern lands are called "Sephardim"; the refugees from European countries are known as "Ashkenazim." We have already seen that the most Jewish places in Palestine are Jerusalem, Safed in Galilee, Hebron and Tiberias (see Chapter xi), and that they are increasing in numbers very rapidly, especially since the "Zionist" Movement has been placing them in colonies in many parts of the country.

In most places the Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians live in their own special quarters. In Jerusalem there is a large Armenian quarter too.

The costume of the Jews is very easily recognised, and their faces are quite different from those of Syrians or Arabs. They often wear curls over their ears, and dark-coloured cloaks and turbans, with soft yellow or red shoes without heels.

The Franks live chiefly in the coast towns. All Europeans living in the Holy Land are called by this name, which comes down from the times of the Crusades, and really means "Frenchmen" (see Chapter xiii). There are also many Greeks and Italians who have so entirely become eastern in their lives and customs that they have almost lost their own

nationality. They are known as Levantines, from the "Levant," the name given to the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea east of Italy.

Until the victory of the Allies, the Turks were, of course, the rulers of the country. They were divided into what we should call Conservatives and Liberals, but they were far behind European nations in good government and even their highest officials would take bribes. The country was divided into "Vilâyats" or provinces, which were again divided into "sanjaks," or districts round the chief towns. The sanjaks were governed by "mutesarrifs" under the governors of the vilâyats. Of course there will be changes in the government of Palestine now, which are gradually being settled (see Chapter xiv).

The Armenians and Copts (the ancient Christian Church of Egypt) have settlements in Jerusalem, but there are not many of them; there are descendants of the Persians in the villages north-west of Galilee, and some tribes of Kurds from Kurdistan live in the papyrus huts on the marshes round Lake Huleh. In some parts of the country are encampments of "Nowar" or gipsies, who are nomads like the Bedouin Arabs, and live in tents. They speak a language of their own, which the Fellahîn call "Asfûrch," or "Sparrows' talk."

You can imagine how wonderfully interesting it is to walk about in Jerusalem or ride

about in the country that has so many different races, religions, costumes, and languages. A few years ago, some gentlemen counted the languages that could be heard in the streets of Jerusalem, and there were fifty different ones.

It would take almost a lifetime to learn how to distinguish the people that are met in the Holy Land. A man with a green turban is a Mohammedan who has been on a pilgrimage to Mecca and who claims to be a descendant of Mohammed himself. The pilgrimage starts from Damascus, and must be undertaken by every Mohammedan once in his life, but he may do it by proxy if he cannot go himself. For twelve hundred years this pilgrimage has gone along the same road every year, but lately many of the pilgrims have gone by sea for a great part of the way, and now they use the railway from Damascus to Mecca. They visit the famous stone (see Chapter xii), and other sacred sites, and have a great feast, and also visit Mohammed's tomb at Medina.

Perhaps we may meet a man with thick long hair like a woman, dressed in a straight black garment, and wearing a tall, straight black hat with a brim at the top. He is a priest of the Greek Church, and also, if his hat has the brim, a monk from one of the monasteries. Another man in a rough brown

cassock, with a cream-coloured cord round his waist, and sandals on his feet, is one of the Franciscan friars (see Chapter xiv), who take care of the Holy Places, perhaps an Italian or Spaniard.

There are, perhaps, three women wearing their veils quite differently, and another who does not wear a veil at all. This one whose face is quite covered is a Syrian Mohammedan ; the one with both eyes visible, and a curious uncomfortable-looking metal tube down the nose is an Egyptian, and the one who has only one of her eyes in sight must be a Druse with a secret religion. The unveiled woman must be a Jew or a Christian.

The boy in the striped blanket kind of cloak, with the thick ruff round his neck, bare arms and legs, and perhaps a whistle made of a reed in his hand, is a shepherd who looks just as David looked when Samuel called him to be king of Israel, and the man in the same shaped cloak, covered with fish-scales, is getting his living on the Sea of Galilee just as the Apostles did in the time of our Lord.

Some parts of the Holy Land are very desolate, especially those where the water supply is bad, and you may go many hours along the ancient paths without meeting anyone. The villages in which the settled peasants live are built either of stone in the mountain districts or of mud in the plains,

and have a wall of mud or a hedge of cactus round them. Jerusalem is the only really large town in Palestine. Only nine other places have as many as 10,000 inhabitants.

As long ago as the time of Tehutmes the Third, the first Egyptian conqueror of Palestine, who lived 1,530 years before Christ, there were at least 119 considerable towns in the country, for he carved a list of them on the walls of his temple at Karnak in Egypt, which is still there. Shishak, the king who invaded Palestine (see Chapter vi) in the reign of Jeroboam I., carved his list on the same Temple walls, and has 133 towns. Nearly ninety places mentioned in the Bible are found in different inscriptions carved between the years 1600 and 700 B.C.

Some of the people in Palestine still live in caves cut in the rocks. The village of Siloam, close to Jerusalem, is almost entirely rock-dwellings, and some ancient Hebrew inscriptions have been found in them.

Both the stone houses in the mountain districts and the mud villages in the plains are so much like the surrounding country in their colour, that it is easy for travellers to pass near them without noticing them unless there is some larger building that is more prominent.

In many of them there is a Mohammedan mosque, a dark, dirty building generally quite bare, except for a niche in the wall

that points to the direction of Mecca. There may be a tall slender tower, if it is in a large village, from which the call to the five daily prayers is chanted. If the village is a Christian one, there may be a Church, sometimes as old as the time of the Crusaders, and some of the mosques have once been Churches too.

In education Palestine has been centuries behind other lands until within the last few years. Now there are many schools and colleges, and a few years ago printing-presses were brought into the country. Beyrout, in Syria, is the centre of educational work, but numbers of the fellahîn and nomadic Arabs cannot read or write. The Christian schools educate both boys and girls, but the Mohammedans do not consider that girls need be taught much. They are wonderful linguists ; it is not difficult to find people who do not know how to read, and yet can speak several languages perfectly. They also have the marvellous memory handed down through all the centuries when everything was taught by word of mouth. You may perhaps not have noticed that all through the Bible there is only one mention of a woman who was able to write—Jezebel, the wicked wife of Ahab, and she was a Phoenician, one of the people who are said to have invented the alphabet (see Chapter iii).

CHAPTER XVII

Trees and Flowers

THE great differences in the climate of the Holy Land make its animals, birds, and plants as varied in the space of a few miles, as they are in almost a whole continent anywhere else. There are those which belong to cold regions, to temperate, sub-tropical and tropical climates.

Palestine has really only two seasons, summer and winter. Have you ever noticed that neither spring nor autumn are mentioned in the Bible, but there are many references to winter and summer? There is hardly any break between the rains of winter and the dry heat of summer. From the end of April to October the sky is almost always clear, the sun shining, and there is no rain at all, and no thunderstorms. The whole country, except where there are many springs, gets parched and burnt until it looks almost like desert. The Bedouins take their flocks up into the mountains to find pasture for them, just as they did in Bible times.

In October the rains begin. These storms

are what the Bible calls the " former rains." It is very wet from December to February, and the " latter rains " fall in March. The former rains break up and soften the ground, which is like iron after the summer heat, and make it possible to sow seeds, which the latter rains bring up.

This climate of mixed wet and heat makes growth most extraordinarily rapid. A few days turn the country from desolation to beauty. We are accustomed in our own country to seeing corn sown in October and reaped in August, but in the Jordan valley it is possible to sow in December and eat bread made of that corn in March. Barley ripens first, and even in the cold parts of the country the harvest is over in May. The wheat harvest follows about three weeks later.

The most important trees in the country are the famous cedars in the mountain lands ; the olives, vines, and figs ; the evergreen oaks and sycamores, and the oranges and lemons in the plains.

The cedars belong rather to Syria than Palestine, especially in the Lebanon district. Some of them are more than a thousand years old, and at one place called Kadisha, there are over four hundred of these magnificent trees.

The " oil-tree," as the Arabs call the olive,

is far away the most valuable tree in Palestine, and every one of them was taxed by the Turkish government. Its silvery leaves, and curious twisted gnarled trunk and branches, make it very different from any other tree. The crops of green berries are enormous, and are beaten off the trees in November by long thin poles. Olives are very slow-growing, and require a great deal of cultivation, but they live for centuries. An olive-grove in bright moonlight looks like a silver forest and is most strangely beautiful.

Of course the most famous olive trees in the Holy Land are the eight very ancient trees in the traditional Garden of Gethsemane, of which the Franciscan friars take such loving care. They are so old that their trunks are split and propped up with great rocks, and they certainly look as though they might have been there even on that awful night when our Lord was praying in some such ancient orchard on Olivet.

This precious tree grows all over the country even now, but it must have been still more abundant in olden times when there was more cultivation, for there are remains of oil-presses cut in the rocks in many parts where no trees are now to be found. In the Vale of Shechem (see Chapter xiv) quantities of mistletoe grows on the trees.

Fig-trees, like the olive, grow in all parts

of Palestine, even among the driest rocks, and are highly valued both for their fruit and their dense cool shadows in that land of sunshine. They are often planted to shade the small square houses underneath them. The fruit is sometimes threaded on long strings, and sometimes pressed into the solid lumps that are familiar to us in this country.

Palestine is one of the best places in the world for growing the vine, except in the coast plains and in the Jordan Valley, where the summers are too hot for it. Before the Israelites ever came into the Holy Land, there were magnificent vineyards near Hebron and the ancient wine-presses are found all over the land. They are very interesting to any thoughtful mind, for many of them must have been made perhaps as far back as the times before the people of Israel and Judah were carried into Assyria and Babylon.

If you want to know what a Palestine vineyard is like, read the first verse of the 12th Chapter of S. Mark's Gospel. There must always be a hedge round the vines because jackals, foxes, and wild dogs will eat the ripe grapes. The owner lives in the "tower" when they are ripe, to guard the crop from thieves. Excellent wine is made from the Holy Land grapes, and the Mohammedans, who are expected by their religion to be total abstainers, make a thick syrup of the juice,

which they call "dibs." The Franciscans at Nazareth give the guests who stay at their hospice "golden wine," which flashes and sparkles like sunshine in the glass. The vines are grown on terraces on the hillsides, just as you have perhaps seen them on the banks of the Rhine.

There are only three common oak trees in the whole of Syria, but in some parts of Palestine there are fine oak forests, and on the east of Jordan they cover the hillsides for miles. In Palestine the oaks are often stunted from being constantly destroyed for fuel or eaten while they were young by goats. We have already thought about the magnificent oak which marks the site of Abraham's encampment at Hebron (see Chapter ii).

The sycamore of the Holy Land does not mean the same tree as our English sycamores, but a kind of fig which will only grow in very warm climates. There are none in the hill country, but splendid specimens grow on the plains and in the Ghôr. Their fruit is not very good, but is gathered and eaten by the peasants. The writer of the earliest book in the Bible, Amos the herdman, used to gather them. These trees grow to a great height, and have enormous trunks. Their wood will last for many centuries, and most of the mummy-cases in the Pyramids and Egyptian tombs are made of it.

The Bible mentions the palm so often that we always think of it as a common Palestine tree, but it does not grow nearly so freely in the country as it did in past ages. There are hundreds of palm-trunks lying in the salt on the Dead Sea shore, but hardly any living trees near the Lake. It flourishes on the coast plains, and scattered groups or single trees are found in some parts of the country. There are none now on the Mount of Olives, but the Armenian monks in Jerusalem have some beautiful specimens in their lovely garden on Mount Zion. There are some at Jenin and also at Tiberias. Quantities of dates, the fruit of the palm, are eaten in the Holy Land, but they come chiefly from Egypt and Arabia. The Arabs say the palm has as many uses as there are days in the year. It was often carved in the ancient rock-pictures and inscriptions, and on coins (see Chapter xi).

We have already noticed the importance of the orange and lemon and citron trees in the coast plains (see Chapter xv), but, except perhaps the citron, they are not natives of the Holy Land, and were not mentioned by any of the Bible writers.

Many of the flowering-trees of Palestine help to make the land beautiful when they are in blossom. Whole villages are almost hidden by the pink bloom of almonds and

peaches, which are as common in many parts as the damsons of England. The Jordan and other streams are edged in many places by the oleander tree, which has gorgeous pink flowers, and the scarlet bell-shaped blossoms of pomegranates make vivid blotches of colour in their dark green foliage.

There is another tree very like an oak which is common in warmer parts of the country, and is called in the Bible the " teil " tree. It is really a terebinth, the tree from which turpentine is obtained, and it grows to a great size. Almost always it is planted by graves, and the Bedouin Arabs look upon it as sacred, and bury their sheiks under it. The tombs where Mohammedan saints are buried are called " Welys," and there is generally a terebinth close to them, often covered with pieces of cloth tied to the branches. One famous sacred tree of this kind is known as the " Mother of Rags."

Another common tree which has enormous quantities of pods as large as the biggest broad beans, is called the " locust tree." The pods are used as food by very poor people, and animals are often fed on them. The " locusts " S. John the Baptist used to eat, and the " husks " with which the prodigal son fed his pigs, may have been these pods of the locust-tree.

Josephus mentions in one of his books how

plentiful walnut trees were in Galilee in his time, and there are still many in the country, in the northern and colder parts.

Among the smaller trees and bushes, thistles and thorns of many kinds have been allowed to overrun great patches of land in various parts of the country. Some of the thorns, especially one called the "Jujube Tree," of which our Blessed Lord's Passion Crown is said to have been made, are quite large trees, and the thistles are sometimes as tall as a man on horseback.

The thorny plants are very useful to the natives, because the hedges round their vineyards and villages are often made of them. They grow into a barrier that no horse or camel will face, and that can only be destroyed by burning. Prickly pear plants are also used for hedges, but those were brought from America. The thorny plants are also used for fuel, and for food for the hard-mouthed goats and camels. Great masses of these bushes have to be burned off the ground in many places before corn can be sown, because the fellahîn have never taken the trouble to root them up, but caravans come into Jerusalem in the winter loaded with huge roots dug up in the mountains for fuel.

The plant from which probably human clothes were first made—flax—grows in Palestine, but it is not so much cultivated

as it used to be, because cotton is taking its place. We have linen still in existence which was made from this pretty blue-flowered plant several thousand years before the time of Christ, long before there was any *written* history, for mummies were wrapped up in it. This linen was made in Palestine before the Israelites returned from Egypt, because Rahab, the woman who hid the spies in her house on the wall of Jericho, covered them with the flax stalks she had laid out there to dry.

A very curious plant found all over Palestine is the mandrake. It is like a huge primrose, with dark purple flowers and round yellow fruit like a large yellow plum. The root of the mandrake, like our beetroot, is often shaped like a human figure, and the Arabs say that it shrieks when it is pulled out of the earth, and that anyone who roots it up will never have any children.

The plains in Galilee and other parts of the country are full of mustard plants, which grow far more rankly and to a much greater size than they do in our cornfields at home, sometimes being ten or twelve feet high. Finches and linnets are very fond of feeding on its seeds.

A plant that is dangerous when it sows itself in the cornfields is a kind of poisonous rye-grass, which the Arabs call "zawân." This was the plant our Lord meant when He

told his story of the "tares" in the wheat-field. It is so like corn when it is growing that it is difficult to distinguish, it, and the fields have to be very carefully weeded. Even when the grain is reaped, it must be carefully sifted, in case any zawân grains have got amongst it.

There are numbers of spice-bearing and sweet-scented herbs in Palestine, and many bitter-tasting plants which the fellahîn and Bedouins use for salads. One of the small trailing plants which has beautiful white blossoms, and pods the size of walnuts, is caper, which botanists think is the "hyssop" mentioned several times in the Bible. It grows in the walls of Jerusalem, and in many rocky places, just as it did long centuries ago. When the writer of the Book of Kings wants to describe how many of the trees and plants of Palestine Solomon knew, he begins with the great cedars on the Lebanon mountains and ends with "the hyssop that springeth out of the wall."

The nettles of Palestine are often enormous. Some of them grow to a height of six feet, and have stings that cause great discomfort. They grow thickly in the deserted parts of the country, and especially where there are ruins, sometimes making it difficult to get near them.

Though there are over a hundred different

kinds of grass in the Holy Land, the green fields with which we are so familiar in this damp climate are almost unknown. For a few weeks in spring there are green pastures in some parts of the country, but when the rains cease and the hot summer sunshine blazes all day long, a few days burns them all up, leaving nothing but withered stalks lying on the ground.

The chief plants in the deserts are a kind of broom, called "juniper" in the Bible, which grows high enough to make a shade from the sun; the acacia, and sometimes there are terebinth trees. Succulent plants, like cacti, will grow there and a few aromatic herbs. In some parts of the desert the ground is covered with the wild gourds called "colocinths," the fruit of which is as large as a melon, and has a rind strong enough when dried to be used for drinking-cups and butter-dishes.

All books about the Holy Land speak of the beauty and profusion of the flowers, but they, like the grass, only last for a few weeks in spring, and then disappear (see Chapter xv).

Scholars have always been puzzled by the "lilies" and "roses" that are mentioned in the Bible, and it is very uncertain what flowers they really mean. Most botanists think that the rose is either the oleander or a

rhododendron which grows near the streams in all the warmer parts of the country.

There are several different kinds of bulbous flowers which the peasants call by the name of "Susan," which is like the Hebrew Bible word for lily, "shûsan," but they are tulips, anemones, or almost any bright-coloured flower of that kind. Red Turk's-cap lilies grow on the plains, and both yellow and white water-lilies in the swamps and marshes. The iris and gladioli of many different colours often grow in large patches, and so do scillas and grape-hyacinths, and many kinds of narcissi.

The crocus abounds in Palestine almost everywhere, and the yellow pistils and stamens of the kinds that have blue blossoms are carefully gathered and dried in the sun to be pounded into saffron for flavouring rice and cakes.

In the hilly districts, the rock-roses are sometimes so thick that they cover the ground like heather does on our own moors, with sheets of pink, white, or yellow flowers. Mount Carmel is lovely from them on all its bare rocky parts, in their flowering time.

No doubt most of the flowers that make the Holy Land so gorgeous in spring grew there in ancient times as they do now, but hardly any of them are mentioned in the Bible—only "lilies" and "roses," and the

blossoms of grape-vines, fig, almond, and olive trees. Fruit is mentioned much more often, and aromatic herbs, of which there is quite a long list in the Song of Solomon, a book full of the natural history of Palestine.

The favourite flower of the Syrian and Arab people seems to be a sweet-scented narcissus. When they are in flower almost everyone, men and women, carries them about, constantly smelling them. Eastern people love sweet scents much more than we do, and they have some very famous ones. The " attar of roses " made in Syria is sometimes worth a guinea a drop, but it is said that the scent will last for a year.

CHAPTER XVIII

Animals and Birds

THE animals and birds of the Holy Land vary as much as the trees and plants in the different climates of the country. There are the bears in the mountain ravines and the eagles on the steep cliffs ; the camels of the deserts ; the leopards hiding in the jungle of the Jordan Valley ; the sheep and goats of temperate lands ; the lovely little purple, green, and gold " sun-bird " exactly like a humming-bird in the hottest parts, and the jumping-mice in the sandy wastes. No land in the world would include all these and the hundreds of other kinds in a space as small as Palestine.

All animals mentioned in the Bible are still found in Palestine except the lion and the unicorn, which are extinct, and the buffalo, which is very common, has been introduced since Bible times, when the Caliphs ruled the country. The " unicorn " was not the imaginary animal with one horn that we see in the Royal Arms of England, although its name means " one horn," but a

two-horned wild ox that used to be plentiful in the forests. The three lions in our King's coat of arms are Palestine lions; the sovereigns of England have borne them since Richard the First led the Third Crusade to the Holy Land. From one of the old Assyrian monuments we know that Tiglath-Pileser (see Chapter vi) hunted lions in Syria when he attacked Pekah, king of Israel, about 1120 B.C., and the bones of both lions and unicorns are sometimes found even now in caves and in the beds of gravel in the Jordan Valley.

The first animal most travellers would notice in the Holy Land is the camel, the famous desert animal that can go for days almost without food and quite without water. They can eat the coarsest desert shrubs, with the most prickly thorns, and they have soft padded feet that can cross the loosest and deepest sand.

The fellahîn use them to draw their wooden ploughs; the Bedouins ride them; and the traders bring their goods from far-off lands on their backs. Long trains of them, always led by the donkey that carries their fodder, are constantly seen going in single file along the rough tracks and across the plains. Before there were any railways in the country, they regularly carried the Mesopotamian mails. A camel can carry a load of 600 lbs.,

and if you meet one in some of the streets of Jerusalem you must go into a house while it passes with its wide pack.

When the excavations at Gezer were made, camel bones were found in the lowest remains, perhaps of before 3000 B.C., many centuries before the Israelites lived in the land. They are constantly mentioned in the Bible from the time of Abraham, especially among the nomadic people.

In Palestine now the camels generally wear harness elaborately decorated with cowrie-shells, silver crescents, and blue beads, and have huge saddles often covered with red velvet.

Donkeys and mules are greatly used in the Holy Land both for riding and for carrying stores. The donkeys are much finer and swifter than those in this country, and white ones are especially valuable. They can travel as long as a camel without resting; are very sure-footed in hilly districts, and must have been used in the very earliest times, for they are carved on the old monuments, both in Egypt and Assyria.

Horses are much more used at the present time than they were in the past. Like the donkeys, they are marvellously sure-footed among the loose rocks, and on the edges of precipices in the mountain districts, and will carry their riders with perfect safety, if only

they are let alone. They are guided by a touch on either side of the neck, not by a pull on the rein, which they only understand as a sign to stop.

The flocks of sheep and goats are enormous ; some of the great Bedouin sheiks have many thousands in their possession, like Mesha, the " sheepmaster " king, whose name is on the " Moabite Stone " (see Chapter vi). On the high flat hills on the east of the Jordan, it would sometimes be possible to ride through dense flocks for miles.

The sheep are valued more for their milk and their wool than their flesh. Goats are much more eaten, but their strong, greasy, black hair is also used for making the tents the Bedouins use on their wanderings from place to place, when they are looking for grass or water. There are so many wolves and jackals in many parts of the country that the flocks must either be folded or guarded at night. In the hilly countries, they are sometimes put into caves.

The goats feed upon herbs and twigs more than upon grass, and it is partly owing to their great numbers that there are so few young trees in Palestine. They are marvellous climbers, and are sometimes seen skipping up the outside staircases of the houses, to feed on the rough grass growing on the flat mud roofs.

Palestine and Syrian sheep have huge tails that weigh perhaps from ten to fourteen pounds, and are simply lumps of fat. They have lop-ears like rabbits, reaching to the ground, and the goats also have enormous drooping ears. The Arabs use the great curved horns of the rams for powder flasks, and the whole skin of a goat when it is dried is the water or wine bottle of the East. They make their coats and belts of sheep-skin, with the wool left on.

Cows are not seen everywhere as they are with us. They can only be kept where there is water and grass all the year round. They are not often killed for food, but are used for ploughing and other agricultural work, and are generally small and poor, except in Galilee, where they get more grass. The Bedouins in the Jordan valley use buffaloes for their ploughing, sometimes yoking a buffalo and a donkey together.

These are all the domestic animals of Palestine, for pigs are hardly ever seen in the country. Jews and Mohammedans alike look upon them as the most unclean of all animals, quite as unfit for human food as we should think a rat, and they are forbidden by their religions to touch them. Dogs also are only wild animals in Palestine, never pets as they are with us, and are almost all the same kind, something like a shepherd dog

but more like a jackal. The Bedouins sometimes keep greyhounds to use in hunting deer.

The towns in Palestine are infested with these wild dogs, and they bark and howl all through the night. They are sometimes savage, but are easily frightened, and they are useful as scavengers. Eastern people don't take the trouble to bury dead animals, so without the dogs which feed on them, there would often be danger of infection from decaying bodies.

The most common *wild* animals in Palestine are wild boars, hyænas, jackals, and wolves.

The boars are dreaded by the fellahîn because they are so terribly destructive. They have powerful tusks with which they will root up a whole field of corn in a very short time. They live in the densest thickets in marshy places and by the side of streams, and cannot be reached except when they come out in search of food. The jungle on the Jordan banks is full of them, all the way from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, but they are most plentiful on the eastern hills. Their mischief is done in the night, and the peasants are often obliged to watch their crops in places where they are very numerous.

The Palestine hyænas are cowardly animals that live very often in the rock-tombs found all over the country, or in caves and holes in the rocks. There are great numbers of

them, especially in Galilee, in the Jordan Valley, and in the ravines and hills close to Jerusalem. They feed on any dead bodies they can find, and will often disturb graves in the burial-grounds.

No traveller who has ridden about in Palestine has failed to hear the howling of the jackals at night. They swarm in almost all parts of Palestine, even close to the towns, and it is partly their presence that makes the wild dogs howl and bark all night. The home of the jackals is generally in caves or in ruined buildings, from which, like the boars and hyænas, they come out at night. They are yellow in colour, which gives them their Latin name of "golden dog." Hyænas generally prowl about in couples, but the jackals go in packs, sometimes very large ones.

The last of these wild, night-prowling animals, the wolf, is found both in the hill country and in the plains. It is much more feared than either jackals or hyaenas because it is quiet, and springs upon its prey without giving any warning. Shepherds are still obliged to guard their sheep from the wolves, unless they are in caves or safe folds, just as they were in David's time or when our Lord Jesus Christ was born.

There are two more savage animals found in some parts of the Holy Land—the leopard and the chetah. They lurk in the Jordan

jungle, and both of them are sometimes killed in the forests of Mount Carmel and on Mount Tabor, a curious round-topped hill near Nazareth. One stream that runs into the Jordan is called by the Arabs "the stream of the leopards," because they are quite common in the thickets on its banks.

Hares are found in Palestine, but no rabbits of any kind. Instead of these they have the animal the Bible calls the "coney," which is about the same size (although, in natural history books, their scientific order comes between the hippopotamus and the rhinoceros), and lives in holes in the rocks. Though in some parts, especially in Northern Galilee, they are very plentiful, it is very difficult to see them, because of their extreme timidity. At the slightest sound they disappear into their holes, and the Arabs, when they want to trap them, sometimes have to watch for many hours, lying quite still among bushes.

There are many foxes in the country, living generally, like the jackals, amongst the ruins, and coming out at night to find their food. They are very mischievous in the vineyards when the grapes are ripe because of their love of the fruit, and only a prickly-pear hedge or a high wall will keep them out.

There are quantities of small animals like rats and mice and dormice in Palestine, of

many different species. One delightful little beast is the jerboa, which is like a tiny kangaroo. It has the same short fore legs and very long hind legs and tail, and leaps about the plains in the same way. They live in burrows wherever the ground is sandy, and can travel with amazing speed. Metal mice made for charms are sometimes dug up in Palestine.

Deer of two or three kinds are natives of the Holy Land. The dainty little gazelle is very common even near large towns. It may sometimes be seen as near Jerusalem as the Mount of Olives, and in Galilee and on Mount Carmel it is very plentiful. It is this beautiful animal that the Bedouins hunt with greyhounds, and also, as sportsmen in England did in the Middle Ages, with trained hawks. Sometimes a hundred gazelles may be seen together in one flock, one of the most beautiful sights in animal life.

In the hill districts and rocky parts of the Holy Land porcupines are common. They live in the holes and crevices, and are never seen in winter because they are fast asleep like a dormouse. They are larger than hedgehogs, and roll themselves into balls with their sharp quills sticking outside, just in the same way. They are so plentiful near the Dead Sea that it is easy to gather a bundle of their quills in a short time.

Palestine has seventeen different kinds of bats, which are animals although they have wings. They also sleep during the cold weather except in the Ghôr, where the heat is so great. They swarm in thousands in all the old ruins, and in the caves. "Solomon's Stables" under the Temple Area (see Chapter v) are full of them, hanging in great clouds.

There are more than 350 kinds of birds in the Holy Land, belonging like the animals and plants to all kinds of climates, and some of them are not found in any other country. The Bible gives a list of birds in the Book of Leviticus (Chapter xi, 13-19), which the Jews were not allowed to eat. Read it in the Revised Version because, when that translation was made, naturalists knew better what birds were meant by the Hebrew words than they did when the Authorised Version was made.

First of all, there are the birds of prey, many of which are magnificent. The "Lämmer-Geier" vulture is nearly five feet in height. It chiefly feeds upon snakes and tortoises, which it kills by dashing them on the rocks from a great height. Its home is in the highest mountain cliffs, where it uses a cartload of sticks and sods to make its nest, but only lays one large orange or pink egg.

The many eagles, griffons, and vultures are

as useful as the wild dogs in devouring dead bodies left unburied. They have the most perfect sight of any living creatures, and can see their prey from such a distance that they themselves are quite invisible to human eyes. Their nests are in the caverns or cliffs of ravines and gorges, but they are seen flying high up almost everywhere, and sometimes sitting in solemn rows from morning till evening on some rocky ledge.

In damp weather, kites and hawks sit in these motionless rows too, when they are not hunting the moles, and mice, and frogs upon which they feed. Some of them eat only insects. The smaller kinds, such as kestrels and sparrow-hawks, often live in the towers of the mosques and churches; there are numbers of them on the Temple Area at Jerusalem. Hundreds of kestrels live about the Church at Lydda, which Richard Cœur de Lion built over the tomb of our patron saint, S. George, and which now belongs to the Greek Church.

All over the Holy Land the ruins are homes for different kinds of owls. The Arabs call them the "Mother of Ruins." One kind, which they call the "Boomah" from its wailing note, is a great favourite, and is never disturbed, but another kind, called in the Bible the "screech-owl" is the "bogey" used by Jewish mothers to frighten naughty children.

Jerusalem makes a home for huge numbers of ravens, jackdaws, crows, and rooks, which often make a deafening clatter about the Temple Area. The Valley of Himmon outside the south wall of the city is used as a place for throwing carrion, upon which the birds feed, because in ancient Bible times human sacrifices were offered in it to heathen gods. The "field of blood" bought with the cost of our Lord's Life, and the tree upon which Judas is said to have hanged himself, are also traditionally said to have been in that valley.

Many of the little birds that are familiar in England are much more abundant in the Holy Land. Sparrows are so numerous that Canon Tristram, a clergyman who wrote a famous book about Palestine natural history, said that he saw the thorn-bushes in the Jordan Valley borne down by the weight of their nests. Swallows and swifts generally leave Palestine in the winter, except in the hottest parts, and cuckoos only come in the summer. The Arabs believe that cuckoos are the souls of those who will be lost at the Judgment Day. There are no yellow-hammers nor nightingales, but a little bird called the "bulbul," chiefly found in the Jordan Valley, is almost as sweet a singer as a nightingale, and larks are very plentiful.

Doves and pigeons are found in thousands

almost everywhere. Large dovecots are built in the villages for them, filled with clay pots in which they can nest, and they are often allowed to live in the houses. Turtle-doves go away in the winter, but the pigeons and the wild rock-doves stay all the year round.

In the rocky and desert parts of the Holy Land there are great flocks of partridges and sand-grouse. They are such inquisitive birds that the peasants catch them by hiding behind a painted calico screen, which they will come to examine. Quails, too, come in the spring from hotter lands and arrive so exhausted that they can be picked up by hand.

The principal water-loving birds in Palestine are cranes, herons, storks, and bitterns, which are all found in marshy places in the spring. The storks almost cover the ground in some parts for several weeks, but when the weather gets hot they go away to colder lands. They have the same friendly habits in Palestine as in other countries, and are cared for and protected. The Jews call them "the affectionate bird," and the Arab name for them is "the father of good luck."

Pelicans live on the marshes near Lake Huleh and the Sea of Galilee in the winter, but they go to Russia in summer, and there are many cormorants and terns on the coast and in the Jordan Valley.

CHAPTER XIX

Reptiles and Insects

PALESTINE, especially in its rocky and sandy districts, is the home of large numbers of reptiles, particularly snakes, lizards, and land and water tortoises.

There are crocodiles only in one place, on the marshes edging a stream called the "Crocodile River" on the Plain of Sharon. Mr. Macgregor in his "Rob Roy" canoe (see Chapter xv) met and fought one of them. A great Roman naturalist named Pliny, who was born while our Lord was on earth, and died in the eruption of Vesuvius which buried Pompeii, found crocodiles in that same place. You can see a stuffed specimen in the Museum of the Palestine Exploration Society in London.

The tortoises hide away in winter, the land ones in holes under leaves or rocks, and the water ones in mud. In hot weather they may be seen crawling about everywhere, and the natives often offer the little land-tortoise to travellers for a pet. It is only about the size of a five-shilling piece.

There are many different kinds of lizards, from a large one nearly two feet long called "dhabb" to the little red, and brown, and blue "gecko," which has feet like a fan that

can hold on to walls and ceilings, and is constantly found in Palestine houses. Some of the lizards belong to marshy and watery places, some are found in rocky districts, and enormous numbers in the desert sands.

Some of the forty different kinds of lizards are eaten by the Bedouins ; their flesh is delicious. They are all quite harmless and some kinds can be easily tamed. Perhaps the most interesting lizard is the chameleon, which climbs about trees on hot days. It is a most curious reptile, for its body is nearly all lungs ; it can look forwards with one eye and backwards with the other, and it can change the colour of its whole body. It feeds on insects, which it catches on a very long sticky tongue.

The ordinary green lizard that we find in England is very common, and many others of the kinds that live in walls. The sand-lizards are called " skinks " ; they do not flash away when they are frightened like an ordinary lizard, but burrow a hole in the sand as fast as possible.

Most of the many snakes in Palestine are as harmless as the lizards, but there are several deadly kinds. In the times of the Crusades some of the soldiers died from snake-bites. The cobra is sometimes found but not often. A little bronze cobra, coiled in a heap with the head and neck erect, was

dug up in the excavations at Gezer. The vipers are very poisonous, their bite sometimes causing death to weakly people, and there is one very deadly little sand-snake which is common in the desert districts. Although it is such a hilly country, none of the " rock-snakes " of other lands have been found in Palestine.

The " Horned Snake " is one of the deadly kinds. It finds the round depression made by a camel's foot in the sand, and coils itself round in it, darting out to attack any passing animal, especially horses, which are terrified at it.

The frogs of the Holy Land are not the same kind as we have in England ; they are water-frogs and tree-frogs. In the marshes and pools the water-frogs, which are bright green, are often in such amazing quantities that they make the surface of the water at night a solid mass of croaking frogs, the noise from which is quite deafening. The tree-frogs, which sit on the leaves catching flies, are lovely little things, green above and white underneath. You can see them in the Zoological Gardens.

The lakes and rivers of Palestine literally swarm with fish. Sometimes you can see shoals on the surface of the Sea of Galilee so dense that they make the water look brown, and the movement of their fins looks like drops of water falling in a shower. The Jews

were always forbidden to eat any fish that has no fins nor scales, and the fishermen still throw "sheat-fish," "skate," "lampreys," and "eels" away, just as the Apostles did when they gathered the good fish and threw the "bad" away. The Bedouin Arabs do not use fish for food, but the settled people eat it freely.

The Jordan is a splendid fishing river all along its course until the water begins to get salt at the Dead Sea, when the fish become stupified and soon die. Clouds of birds wait for them there to feed upon them when they become helpless.

The Franciscans in the Monastery at Tiberias give their guests fish from the Sea of Galilee, beautifully cooked and most delicious, and many of the small kinds are dried and eaten by the peasants as a relish with their early morning meal. Some of the fish in this lake are luminous, and we have already noticed (see Chapter xv) some other curious kinds when we were thinking about the Jordan.

There is a shell-fish which is still found on the sea-coast at Tyre, from which the famous colour that is called in the Gospels sometimes "purple" and sometimes "scarlet" was made. One drop of fluid was taken from a gland in the throat of the fish to make the dye. No-one now knows how it was done,

but the great beds of crushed shells can still be seen at Tyre.

Some eastern nations used to worship fish gods in very ancient times. The Philistine god " Dagon " is believed to have been one of these idols, and the Jews were forbidden in the second Commandment to make images of anything in the water. In the heathen temples in Egypt quantities of fish-mummies have been found.

The first thing travellers in the Holy Land who are camping out of doors must do, before they pitch their tents, is to have a scorpion-hunt, under every stone. These insects have a most poisonous sting, and there are such myriads of them that they are difficult to avoid. They get into houses, and live in chinks of walls, but chiefly under stones on the ground. Some of them are about six inches long, but there are several different kinds, which vary in colour.

You know the little black English insect which goes by the name of the " Devil's coachman," and has a long jointed tail which it curls over its back when it is running along ? A scorpion is very like that insect three or four times as large, and it curls up its long tail in exactly the same way.

There are hundreds of different kinds of spiders in Palestine. It is possible sometimes to find the wonderful " trap-door spider,"

which digs a hole for itself, lines it with silk, and makes a door to it with silk hinges.

The most famous of all insects in eastern countries is the locust. It belongs to the grasshopper family, of which there are many kinds in Palestine, many of them living there all the year round. Some of them run when they are on the ground, and some leap.

Of course they are perfectly harmless to man, but are dreaded intensely because of the mischief they do to the country when they come in swarms. The kinds that destroy vegetable life in this way are dangerous simply from their enormous numbers. They migrate like birds into hotter lands, and it is a good thing for Palestine that they only visit the country in these huge swarms occasionally. They come, not in hundreds or thousands, but in countless millions. A swarm may take more than two days to pass over a place, and they fly in such dense masses that they hide the sunshine.

Nothing but the sea can stop them. If fires are lighted, they crowd over them until they have put them out. A small stream they will fill up, and then pass on over those that are drowned. They cannot fly in the cold or damp, and wherever they settle there is not an atom of anything green left, not even the bark of trees. As they fly they make a noise like a waterfall. The prophet

Joel in the Bible compared the sound to chariots on the mountain cliffs, or the roar of flames in a burning cornfield.

You can understand how the fellahîn dread the coming of these terrible grasshoppers, because it means the entire destruction not only of their cornfields, but of their fruit trees, their olives, and figs, and vines for that year. When they have settled on any place, it looks exactly like a wilderness, bare of everything, and the people have to live on dried fruits and parched corn which has been laid up in former seasons.

The worst time for the locusts to come is in the spring, because they lay their eggs then in the ground. These hatch the next year and the larvae are quite as destructive as their parents were; they can eat three times their own weight in one day.

The different words in the Bible for "caterpillars," "grasshoppers," "cankerworms," "palmerworms," and others, all mean locusts at different ages, or of different kinds.

Most of the Arab tribes eat the locusts stewed with butter, when they taste very like shrimps. Storks are very fond of them, too, and eat great quantities. The Bedouins have a proverb about their enormous numbers: "The locust laid a hundred eggs, and said 'What a very small family'!"

The fellahîn used to beat drums and

kettles, and blow trumpets as soon as they saw a swarm in the sky, to prevent the insects settling on their fields, but it was never much use. Now, if the swarms are not too large, soldiers are sent out with great quantities of petroleum to destroy them.

The wonderful little insects, the ants, are also found in myriads in Palestine. Their homes underground are quite marvellous from the skill with which they are made. They build with minute clay bricks, and make wooden beams and rafters with pieces of stick, and they can form an arch as well as the most accomplished builder.

Most of the Palestine ants collect seeds and grain in the summer and store them in their underground granaries for the winter, during which they do not come out. Some of these stores of seed are so great that the Jews made laws, saying to whom they would belong if they were discovered. If they were found before the harvest was cut, they belonged to the owner of the field, but if afterwards, they were to be given to the poor, like the "gleanings" that were always left on the ground.

Their tiny narrow paths can be seen everywhere when the winter is over, with the little insects dragging their heavy burdens, much larger than themselves, back to their homes. Sometimes strings of them go up and down the trees collecting green fly and the gum that may be found on the branches.

Some kinds of ants have no sting; those that have are not very powerful, and only irritate for a short time.

Another curious dark-red insect which is found on prickly evergreen oaks in many parts of the Holy Land, is used for making cochineal dye. It is about the size of a cherry-stone. Another kind feeds on the cactus hedges round the fields and villages.

Hornets' wonderful nests are often found in the Holy Land, hanging from stones or beams, and sometimes in the ground. They make them of thin bark and the honey-combs inside them are very large.

The Holy Land is a splendid country for bees because it is so rocky and has such a dry climate for the greater part of the year. They love the different kinds of thyme, and the crocus that grows everywhere. The bees are both wild and "tame." Hives for domesticated bees are made of drain-pipes, closed with mud at each end, except for a little hole for the insects to go in and out. Some of the fellahîn have pyramids of these pipes, with a swarm of bees in each.

The wild bees are very plentiful, especially in the desert parts of Judaea, where they make their nests in the cracks and fissures of the limestone rocks. The Bedouins sell great quantities of the honey.

Fleas and flies are so numerous in the Holy

Land that sometimes they are really dangerous. The fellahîn are not very cleanly, and the enormous numbers of their flocks, especially goats, cause the fleas to breed in myriads. The Arabs say that the king of fleas lives at Tiberias. In desert places the sand is often alive with them, and it is the same wherever there has been a Bedouin encampment.

The most dangerous flies are mosquitoes, because they not only have a poisonous bite, but they carry the infection of malarial fever. The cisterns where water is stored are often breeding-places for them, making the water so unwholesome that it must always be boiled before it is fit to drink. They are most plentiful in the hotter parts of the country, especially in the Jordan Valley. The common house-fly carries another infectious disease — ophthalmia, or eye-inflammation—from which numbers of the natives suffer, and which often causes total blindness. The hospitals now in Palestine, however, are making this trouble much better, by treating the inflammation in time.

We know, both from the Bible story and from scientific facts that both vegetable and animal life existed on the earth long before there were any human beings. The accounts of the Creation which had been handed down among the Hebrews, and which were used by

the unknown writers of the Book of Genesis, said that they were created in " days," but we know that this is only an eastern way of telling the story, for the " days " were really very long periods of time, many thousands, perhaps even millions, of years.

The Bible also says that they were first created in the " Garden " of Eden, but you must not think of that " garden " as a small piece of ground that one man could cultivate. No one knows exactly where the first forms of vegetable and animal life began, but it is generally believed that the Garden of Eden was somewhere in Mesopotamia, because the Bible says that four rivers rose in it, one of which was the Euphrates, and another, almost certainly, the Tigris.

Long before there were human beings in the world there was a time when gigantic animals, reptiles, birds, and fishes, which are now extinct, lived on the earth. Their skeletons are found sometimes in caves, or frozen into the solid ice in cold countries, so we know what they were like, although they disappeared from the earth many thousand years ago. There were beasts like elephants, only far larger. One was eighty feet in length, more than twenty-six yards! Others were huge flying lizards, gigantic antelopes as tall as the highest trees, and kangaroos six times the size they are now. There were giant birds, too, which had no wings.

In a deep valley between Jerusalem and Jericho fossil sea-urchins, with knobs as large as olives at the ends of the spines with which they are covered, are often found in the stone. Bones of animals that died thousands of years ago are found in the caves, and sometimes in the lowest parts of the "Tels," when they are excavated. Probably many more will be discovered when the deep gorges and ravines are more thoroughly explored, for the mountains in many parts are honeycombed with ancient caves.

Many of the ancient Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian monuments have animals carved on them, sometimes as they really are, and sometimes as grotesque monsters, such as eagles with human bodies. Lions, horses, fish, deer, and especially bulls, often carved with wings, are found, and scholars are gradually learning what they mean, and finding out much deeply interesting history from them.

Perhaps in no part of the world is the history of vegetable and animal life more wonderful and fascinating than in the small country the great Creator of all life chose to be especially His own. The more we study it; the more explorers discover; the more clearly we find that the old Bible document was right when it said, "In the beginning God created the earth."

CHAPTER XX

Manners and Customs

FROM beginning to end of the Bible there are descriptions of the manners and customs of the people living in the Holy Land, which are as true at the present time as they were when they were written, especially those which tell of the life of the peasants. Houses, clothes, food, and occupations have hardly altered at all since the time when our Lord lived in the country, or even long before His time. We should try to realise how very different life in eastern lands is from life as we know it, and the more we learn about it, the more we shall understand the Bible, and above all, the wonderful love of the Lord Who lived such a Life for us.

Palestine peasants have hardly any of the things that we consider necessary for comfort, or even existence. Their houses are often a single room, with stone or mud walls and a flat roof, reached by a flight of steps outside. There are no windows except a hole cut in the wall, no chimneys, and the floor is made of hard mud. Houses exactly like these have been excavated at Gezer and

Lachish and other places, which were inhabited about 4,000 years ago, after the time of the cave-dwellers (see Chapter ii).

The interior is often divided into two parts, one of which is a little higher than the other. On this the people live and sleep, and the cows, donkeys, and goats are stabled in the lower part. There is sometimes a hearthstone, but usually the cooking is done outside.

The furniture consists of mats laid on low shelves round the room for beds, and others for seats; some large bins for holding corn or olives; a hand-mill for grinding; skins for wine; water-pots shaped like huge pears; wooden kneading-troughs; some pottery and various baskets, and very little else.

In the towns the houses are more comfortable. The beds are generally the same mats on "divans," but there may be a small table; brass or copper trays; jugs and basins; sometimes beautiful lamps, instead of the tiny clay ones the fellahîn use; and possibly a copper brazier for burning charcoal. Town houses have several rooms, which are built round an open court, with a fountain or water-tank in the centre, called the Khosh.

Thousands of specimens of pottery have been dug up in Palestine. Some of them are so old that they go back to the times of the Amorites, before the Israelites came into the

land (see Chapter ii) ; others are Phoenician, and then comes the Jewish pottery, some of which have inscriptions like the one in the tunnel at Siloam (see Chapter vii).

Eastern people usually only eat two meals in the day, the principal one being in the evening. A piece of bread with "dibs," or a handful of olives is all they want in the morning. For "dinner" they eat a great deal of rice, parched corn, vegetables, and salads, but not very much meat. Mutton and veal are kept for special occasions ; goat-flesh is eaten more often ; pork and bacon, of course, never. Fruit is very plentiful, and figs, raisins, olives, and fresh grapes are within the reach of the poorest fellahîn.

Bread is freshly made every day, nearly always of barley. The grain must be carefully sifted to get out the poisonous "zawan" seeds ; it is ground in a hand-mill ; the bread is mixed in the kneading-trough, and baked generally on the outside of a kind of oven sunk in the ground, and filled with fuel. Some very ancient "pit-ovens" have been found in the excavations. The bread is baked in flat cakes, like our crumpets ; it is always broken, never cut, and no Mohammedan will tread on a crumb.

For drink, the fellahîn have sheep and goat-milk, and the wine they make from their

grapes. They use their fingers instead of knives and pieces of bread for forks.

The clothes worn by the peasants have changed very little since early Bible times. In shape they are very like the vestments worn by the clergy when they celebrate Holy Communion. A short tunic, to which only a sheikh and his eldest son may have long sleeves, is called the "kamees." In Sennacherib's famous cylinder (see Chapter vii), his Jewish captives from Lachish are all wearing this same kind of tunic in 701 B.C. A leather girdle, generally made of goatskin, is worn over this. The outer garment is called by the Arabs "Abbayeh." It is almost always in white or brown stripes for a man, red and white for a woman, and is often made of camel's hair. The peasants sleep in their abbayehs. They usually wear some form of turban, with thick folds at the back of the neck to protect them from the sun's power.

Thick heavy boots of camel or buffalo hide, and light leather slippers, generally red or yellow, are worn out of doors, but not in rooms. They are left at the doors as a mark of respect.

Women often wear head-dresses to which rows of silver, or even gold coins are fastened. A bride wears twenty of these coins, and sometimes the head-dress weighs several

pounds. They also often have "charms" of beads, bones, bits of alum, or sentences from the Koran in little leather cases. Young children, as a rule, have only one garment like a shirt, slipped on over their heads.

The "effendis" or gentlemen, in Palestine wear exactly the same "suits" of clothes, but they are made of much richer materials, often elaborately embroidered.

Bedouins are generally armed with finely ornamented guns, lances, and daggers, and the shepherds have a club with a round hard knob at the end, with spikes in it, and a sling. The fellahîn carry a leather bag suspended from their girdles, which often holds their food for the day's work, but sometimes they use sleeves as bags.

The peasants wear rings and bracelets of the blue glass which is made at Hebron. The Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem gives a chain of blue beads to ladies from other lands who visit him.

Women stain their finger-nails, and paint their eyes with red or black colour, generally made from a plant called henna, and kept in small metal flasks, with a spike in them with which to lay it on.

There are village shops in Palestine, but our English shop-keepers would think them very curious. Perhaps they are under an arch, or in a hole in the rock, without any

wall in front. The shopkeeper sits on a raised seat, and keeps his goods in rows of old petroleum tins, or wooden boxes, laid on their sides. There is very little money in the country, and most of the shopping is done by exchange, as it was in Bible times. A peasant with a vineyard will give his grapes to one who has a cornfield, or take eggs to a shop to exchange for sugar, water-melons for tobacco, or lumps of pressed figs for a sheepskin coat. They do not, as a rule, have any bills, but keep their accounts in their wonderful memories, when anything is not paid for at the time.

In the towns, the shops are called "bazaars," the Persian word for "market." In large towns, like Jerusalem and Damascus, all the shops of one kind are together in one bazaar, a custom as old at least as the time of Jeremiah. When Zedekiah allowed him to be taken out of the wet dungeon (see Chapter vii), he was fed daily with "a loaf of bread out of the bakers' street." Sometimes the bazaars are covered in like our "arcades." They are usually open to the street, and many of the goods are laid on the ground. A "Shoemakers' Bazaar" or the "Fruit Bazaar" is often a mass of bright colour, from the red and yellow shoes, and the bright-hued fruits.

Shopping in Palestine, and in all eastern

lands, is a very slow business, because the natives always ask about four times the value of everything, and have no idea of time. Very often they will send to the nearest café for small cups of the thick, rich, eastern coffee and offer it to the buyers, and then spend hours bargaining for quite small articles. There are a few shops now in Jerusalem where the prices are fixed, but they are kept by Europeans.

The money used in Palestine is Turkish. Before the war English and French money were current, but not German silver, nor any Egyptian coins. A Turkish "piastre" is worth about 2½d. in English money. Sellers will almost always take about half what they ask; and buyers end in giving rather more than they offer at first. An eastern bazaar keeper generally offers his goods to strangers for nothing, at first, saying "as it's *you*," or "for *thy* sake," and by and bye he will remark that the price is perhaps "one little English pound."

Of course, the Holy Land peasants have never been used to clocks or watches; they tell time and distance without any accuracy at all. If the fellahîn are asked the age of a boy, they will give some such answer as, "he was born the same year as the red camel," or they will tell you that the distance to a place is "after three hills," or "three

hours," which may mean anything, probably nowhere near the time that it really would take to go there.

The fellahîn are very superstitious, and are afraid of omens, the evil-eye, and harmful spirits of all kinds. No Mohammedan will go to live in a new house until he has killed either a sheep or goat as an offering to the spirit his building has disturbed. In very ancient times a human life was offered, and scholars tell us that this is the meaning of the babies buried in jars at the thresholds and under the foundations of houses in the lowest parts of the "tells" (see Chapter ii). The "charms" they wear are intended to protect them against evil spirits.

The old superstition in this country about magpies which we have in the rhyme—

> "One for sorrow,
> Two for mirth,
> Three for a wedding, and
> Four for a birth,"

is also a Palestine superstition, but the unlucky things to meet there are a raven, a gazelle, or a woman with an *empty* water-pot.

Both fellahîn and Bedouins are very hospitable to strangers. They have a proverb which says "A small house will hold a hundred friends," and they will take any trouble to help those who have eaten food in their houses or tents. In wealthy houses,

the servants who bring coffee to the guests, hold their left hands on their hearts.

There are ruins of " khans," or inns, in many parts of the Holy Land. They are generally rough buildings of loose stone, open on one side or more to the courtyard that surrounds them. On roads where there is much traffic, the khans are still in use. There is a famous one called the " Inn of the Good Samaritan " on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, and one at the point where travellers riding from the north catch their first sight of the Mount of Olives, with the walls of Jerusalem behind it.

It is not easy for us to imagine how little recreation the Holy Land fellahîn have in their lives. Some of them play musical instruments, which are either a flute made of two reeds with holes in them ; a violin formed with a wooden box, a horn, the skin of an animal, and some horsehair ; or a drum made of a tube of pottery, with a skin over one end. Dancing-bears are sometimes seen in the country, and more often, snake-charmers, and public story-tellers are welcome everywhere.

All eastern people are fond of riddles, puzzles, and proverbs, and they still describe things by parables as they did in both Old and New Testament times. Some of their proverbs are very like our own, such as

" Don't say 'beans' till they are in your bag," " When cooks increase the food is burnt," or " The cat's away ; look sharp, mouse ! "

Men play a game on a board with small stones in holes, something like " solitaire," which is called " Mankaleh," and boys are very fond of " Kûr," a game like hockey, played with curved sticks and a rag ball, which has to be hit into a hole in the ground called " the mother."

In the harvest and vintage times the fellahîn leave their houses and live in the open air, until the corn or grapes are safely gathered and stored. Sometimes the little babies in their swaddling-clothes are hung from a tripod of sticks, while their mothers are at work.

The corn harvest is in the spring, as we have already noticed. Barley comes first, and the wheat is ready to cut when the barley is stored. In the villages there is a flat piece of ground, covered with clay, baked hard by the sun, which is the " threshing-floor." On this the grains are extracted from the ears, either by the feet of several oxen driven about on the corn, or by logs of wood, with sharp stones set in them, which are dragged over it. The grain is thrown into the air, when a breeze is blowing ; the chaff is blown away, and the corn is then stored in large jars, or earthern bins, or some-

times in the sunk cisterns which the Bible calls " barns."

The vintage is in the autumn. Some of the grapes are trodden in the wine-presses by men standing on large flat stones, and the juice is used for wine and for making " dibs," while others are dried in the hot sun for raisins. The best kind of Holy Land grapes are called " Daughters of Damascus." Eastern people love sweets like children. The " dibs " juice is used for making many different kinds. Most delicious " Turkish Delight " is the favourite sweet. Everyone, from the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem to the fellahîn, gives it to anyone who goes to see them.

The last harvest of the year is the in-gathering of the olives in the late autumn or early winter. They are knocked off the trees with sticks, and the oil is pressed out of them by a revolving stone mill turned by a mule or a camel, and then a kind of screw-press. The oil is kept in goatskins or jars, Many of the olives are pickled in salt and water, and eaten with bread.

In the times between the different harvests, the peasants make charcoal from the ever-green oak-trees, or burn lime for building, or make pottery. The men also make mats of grass or papyrus ; baskets of willow branches, grass, or wheat straw ; and they do a great deal of spinning and weaving, both the cloth

for their big cloaks, and also " haircloth " for the tents used by the Bedouins.

Women work very hard all the year round. They collect the firewood, no easy work in a country where there are so few trees ; draw the water from the spring, which may be a long way from their home ; clean the corn and grind it fresh every day ; and they make the clay bins in which their corn, olives, and other things are stored. They make a great deal of " Leben," a food like curds and whey made of curdled milk, and both the settled peasant women and the Bedouins churn a quantity of butter. The milk is put into a goatskin tied to a tripod of sticks ; two women push it backwards and forwards until it is churned.

Many people in Palestine seem to get their living by begging for " bakshîsh," which means " a gift." In Jerusalem, the poor lepers, who live apart from everyone else in hospitals or settlements of their own, are often met in the road near Gethsemane, waiting to ask passers-by to give them some help. Perhaps they are the saddest of all human sufferers, and there is no cure known for their terrible disease. The Turks have a hospital for them near Siloam, and so have some German Moravians, but they must live separate and lonely lives to the end for fear of giving the disease to other people.

CHAPTER XXI

Religious Life in Palestine

THE customs of the people in Palestine depend very much upon the religion to which they belong, Christian, Mohammedan, or Jewish. Each faith has its own holy day, when the bazaars of its people are closed, and special services held in the Church, the mosque, or the synagogue. Friday is the Mohammedan holy day, because the "Korân" says that Adam was created on that day. The Jews, of course, still keep their Saturday "Sabbath" and the Christians their weekly resurrection festival on Sunday.

One of the strictest of all Mohammedan customs is the long fast, lasting exactly a month, called "Ramadân." It is always the ninth month in the year, but as the Arabs have "lunar" months of exactly four weeks, the year has eleven fewer days than our reckoning, and this fast falls at a different time each year. When it is in summer, the long days and the great heat make it a very hard task to keep the fast, for from the time when it is light enough "to distinguish a

white thread from a black one," until sunset not so much as a drop of water may be swallowed. In the Jordan Valley, where even in May the heat may be 110° in the shade, the suffering from thirst must be terrible. At Jerusalem a gun is fired when the daily self-denial is over.

The Mohammedans have no priests. A man called a "Khatîb" or "Exhorter," leads the prayers in the mosques, and does other religious duties, such as marrying and burying. He has a share in the village corn for his salary. There are also numbers of "Dervishes," in long robes and very tall coloured hats, going about the country, who are looked upon as holy men. Like the Franciscans, they get their living by begging. Sometimes they shout the Name of God for hours without stopping, until they work themselves up into hysterical fits, and often become unconscious. The Dervishes write the "charms" worn by the peasants as protection against the evil eye.

There are about seventy different sects of Mohammedans. One of the principal ones reverences Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed, much more than the prophet himself.

Sometimes the Mohammedans have pilgrimages, with red and green banners, and a great deal of noisy music. There is one in the spring to the place in the Jordan

Valley where they believe Moses was buried, and others to famous "Welys" in other parts.

A great feast, lasting several days, called "Great Beiram," is held at the time when the annual pilgrimage (see Chapter xvi) has reached Mecca, and another, the "Lesser Beiram," at the end of the Ramadân fast.

Mohammedans are allowed by their religion to have four wives, and the women are generally married when they are almost children, perhaps only twelve years old. The latter is the custom with Christians in Palestine also. Men and women in a Mohammedan house do not live together. The women's part is called the "Harem," which means "forbidden," because no men but the near relations of the women may go in. The boys live in the harem until they are seven years old, and then go to the men's part.

The women in wealthy houses are kept very strictly in their own part of the house. Out of doors they are obliged to wear a veil over their faces. They are hardly educated at all, and spend most of their time dressing up, eating sweets, and laughing over silly games.

Marriages are arranged by relations, and the bride and bridegroom, perhaps a young boy and girl, have never seen each other. The bridegroom *buys* his bride, just as they did in the Bible times, and the relations arrange the price, which may be paid in

money, or in cattle, or in land. A peasant girl bride, who is clever at any trade by which she can earn money, is worth about £60, in English money, but an ignorant girl can be bought for £20. There are processions and feasts at the time of the wedding, and then the wife goes into the harem in her husband's house, and perhaps hardly ever comes out again until she is an old woman. Of course Jewish and Christian brides are not shut up like this, but they are not treated with the care and respect shown to women in this country.

Mohammedans value really only their boy children; they think nothing of what they call "a piece of a daughter." Even in Christian peasants' houses, if guests are present, the women often have their meal after the men, in a separate room. Women and men are always separated in the mosques, and they are never buried together in the same part of a tomb or cemetery. In the Bedouin tents, they have their own part shut off from the men's side.

Of course, the peasant women, even when they are Mohammedans, are not so strictly shut up as ladies are, and have much busier and happier lives. We have already thought how hard many of them work all the year round.

Funeral customs in the Holy Land, like

everything else, have changed very little since Bible times. They still have professional mourners, who are hired to shriek and wail until the body is buried, and all the friends and relations share in the loud grief, so that it is painful to be anywhere near a house where a death has taken place. The funeral follows death in twenty-four hours. Mohammedans wrap the dead in white and green sheets, and as the body is carried to the grave, the Khatîb never ceases saying the creed "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet," lest the dead person should forget it. They always put two stones over the grave, for the angels who come to see whether the departed person is a true believer.

The favourite burial-place both for Jews and Mohammedans, and in past times, for Christians too, is the deep valley on the east of Jerusalem, between the City and the Mount of Olives, because of the ancient tradition that the Last Judgment will be there. The entire valley is full of gravestones, clearly seen in all photographs of Jerusalem from that side.

The *national* Church of Syria and Palestine is the Greek Church, and most Christians in the country belong to it. The Roman Catholic Church holds the same position in Palestine as it does in England; it is

simply a true branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, but not the Church of the land. The Church of England, the Armenian Church, and the Coptic are all in the same position in the Holy Land.

The chief clergy of the Greek Church corresponding to our Archbishops are called "Patriarchs," a word meaning the "first father" or "fatherly ruler." The patriarch of Jerusalem is the head of the clergy in Palestine, and there is another patriarch at Beyrout in Syria. The Patriarch is the rightful bishop of Jerusalem, and no other bishop should have that title. We call our own bishop in the Holy City, the "Anglican Bishop *in* (not "of") Jerusalem."

Some of the other Greek bishops live at Jerusalem, and some live in their own dioceses. There are many monasteries and hospitals, and hospices belonging to this most ancient Church, of which the first bishop was a relation of our Blessed Lord's, who prayed so much for his people that his knees grew as hard as a camel's.

The present Patriarch lives close to his famous Cathedral Church of the Holy Sepulchre. His house has three Churches in it, and a fine library. He is always glad to see visitors from other lands, and is very friendly indeed to the English Church. He allows English priests to celebrate the Holy

Communion in the "Chapel of Abraham" in the Holy Sepulchre Church, and provides them with Bread, stamped with a figure of the Crucifixion, and Wine, for the Service.

The Services of the Greek Church are generally in Arabic, but sometimes in Greek, if the clergy know that language only. They are often very long, and very tiring, as there are no seats in a Greek Church. They never have musical instruments; all the singing is unaccompanied. In some of the churches, sticks with long cross-pieces at the top, are used to lean against, by people who get very tired.

The village clergy have had very little education, and are often sadly ignorant, but the monks who live in the monasteries are much more intelligent. The Christian Churches in the villages are poor, neglected, and often dirty buildings, like the Mohammedan mosques, but we must realise how very, very poor the people are; the salary of a priest is only about a pound a month. He has to make up his living, like the peasants, by his olives, or vines, or his sheep and goats. There are no sermons at these village churches; the clergy have only to celebrate Holy Communion and read prayers. They wear a cassock with a black gown over it, and the tall hat with the rim at the top we have already noticed.

It was only during the last few years before the war that the Mohammedans allowed the bells of Christian Churches to be rung. Ever since the time of the Caliph Omar (see Chapter xii) it had been forbidden, and at one of the largest of the Greek monasteries, in the most desolate part of the precipitous mountains near the Dead Sea, and also at a large Armenian monastery in Jerusalem, the old bronze gongs the Christians used instead, are still to be seen.

There is one very interesting but very sad ceremony of the Greek Church which takes place on Easter Eve in the Holy Sepulchre Church, called the "Holy Light." The people have been taught to believe that fire comes down from Heaven to the Tomb where our Lord was buried, and huge crowds come from all parts to see the sacred flame, and light their candles and tapers at it. Many of them stay in the Church all the night before, and the great building is packed from end to end. The Patriarch goes alone into the Holy Seuplchre, and puts the light through a round hole in the wall of the little chapel that surrounds it. Of course educated people know that it is not a miracle, but the peasants and pilgrims believe that the light really comes from Heaven.

The light is carried out to the country villages, where it is met by the priests in

their finest vestments, with censers and singing. This ceremony has been performed every Easter for at least a thousand years. There have been many tumults and fights in the struggles for the light, and once 300 pilgrims were killed in the Church.

The Roman Catholic, or " Latin " Church clergy are not nearly so ignorant as the Greek priests. Many of them, especially the Franciscans, are foreigners, chiefly Italians and Spaniards. The Patriarch of the Latins also lives in Jerusalem, and so does the Abbot of the Franciscans, who is called the " Custodian of the Holy Places " (see Chapter xiv).

The Latins have many monasteries, hospices, and schools, and are always ready to give lodging to travellers, charging them nothing if they are poor pilgrims.

Armenia was the first country to make the Christian Church its national religion. The Armenians are numerous enough in Jerusalem to have a special quarter of the City on Mount Zion. They have a very large Monastery with guest-houses for several thousand pilgrims, and they too, are specially friendly to the English Church. The Patriarch lives on Mount Zion. If English strangers happen to go into the great Monastery Church, where S. James the Great is traditionally said to be buried, during service,

the Patriarch greets them with smiles and bows, and clouds of incense. Sprigs of rosemary are presented to visitors when they leave the Church. This monastery has lovely gardens, where the only palm-trees in Jerusalem grow (see Chapter xvii).

The faith of the Armenian Church is almost the same as that of the Greek Church. They keep Christmas on the Feast of the Epiphany. It is one of the most ancient branches of the Church, for the Armenians were converted at the beginning of the fourth century by "Gregory the Enlightener," who was their first patriarch. At first this Church had only one patriarch, who lived at Samaria; they first had a patriarch at Jerusalem in 1311, about forty years after the last Crusade.

There is another very ancient branch of the Church in Syria, the members of which are called "Jacobites." It was founded as long ago as 570 A.D. by a beggar saint named Jacob Baradai. His surname means "a horse-blanket," which was what he wore. The Jacobite patriarchs are always called "Ignatius," after the great saint of that name, who was S. John's disciple, and was torn to pieces by lions, in the Colosseum at Rome, about the year 115 A.D. The Jacobite patriarch does not live in Palestine, but they have a small Church in Jerusalem, which

they believe to be the house that was S. Mark's home in the time of our Lord.

There are some members of the Coptic Church, the ancient national Church of Egypt, living in Palestine, especially in Jerusalem, where they have a monastery and a neglected little Church. The Copts are very ignorant and very poor, but we owe many of the most interesting ancient Syriac, Coptic, and Arabic books in our British Museum, to the care with which the Coptic monks preserved them in the Egyptian monasteries.

The Coptic Church has only one patriarch, who ordains all Clergy by breathing on them, and anointing them with oil. He lives at Alexandria in Egypt.

The Church of England has a fine modern Church outside the Damascus Gate of Jerusalem, with a school, and a house for the Bishop. The Church is dedicated to S. George, the patron Saint that Palestine gave to us (see Chapter xiii). We have other Churches, and schools, and hospitals, in many parts of the country.

Nearly all the different branches of the Church have their own special Chapels in the Holy Sepulchre, and the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, and parts of those famous Churches are free to all. In spite of this, however, there have been many sad

quarrels amongst them, sometimes about very trivial things, such as the sweeping of a staircase, or the lighting of a lamp. Sad as these disputes are, they remind us how through all the centuries, the Christian Church has held everything that was believed to have been connected with our Lord Jesus Christ as a great treasure, well worth fighting and death.

It is this that has brought all the different branches of the Church to Palestine, and it is this that has made countless millions of pilgrims of all nations and lands look upon a visit to that country as the great event of their lives. S. Jerome, the famous Latin Church teacher and writer, who lived in a cave under the Church at Bethlehem from 386 to 420. A.D., says in one of his epistles : " From all quarters—even from the distant Britain—pilgrims flocked to the sacred sites of Palestine, and on their return they carried with them water from the Jordan, earth from the Redeemer's Sepulchre, and chips of the true Cross." This was fifteen hundred years ago, and the stream of pilgrims goes there still.

In the early days, when travelling was difficult and dangerous, when there were no railways nor steamers, hardly any roads or bridges, and great perils from robbers and murderers on the way, a visit to the Holy

Land might take a year. Pilgrims made their wills before they started, and took a winding-sheet with them in case they died on the way. Even now, many of the pilgrims who go from such lands as Russia, have been months on the way, and some of them have perhaps saved their money for years that they might see the land where Jesus lived before they died.

When we hear anything about Jerusalem, or Bethlehem, or Nazareth, we have not at all the same feeling as when someone tells us something about New York, or Petrograd, or Madrid; reading about the Holy Land is quite a different thing from reading of the United States or Brazil; and only those who have gone with loving reverence can know the joy of being in the country. It is not the wonderful interest of the people and the places; it is not the fascination of the strange oriental life; it is the Incarnate Life of our Lord Jesus Christ that has made this little country the *Holy* Land.

CHAPTER XXII

Modern Jewish Life

PERHAPS you will like to know whether the Jews still keep up the customs of the Old Testament in their religious life at the present day, and what their home life is like in the countries where they are still scattered.

With the very strict Jews their religion comes into every part of their life, even into the smallest details. Their houses, especially their kitchens and cooking arrangements, the dress they wear, the food they eat, their furniture and ornaments—all alike are subject to religious laws and regulations.

These regulations are not only the directions in the Bible, but also those in what is called the "Talmud." The Jews believe that God's Law was given to them in two forms, one handed down by word of mouth called the "oral law," and the other the "written law" in the books of Moses. The "oral" law was not written down until about the middle of the 3rd century, and the work was

first done at Tiberias (see Chapter xi). The "Talmud," which has 4,000 laws in it, took about 150 years to complete, and the Jews consider it as no less sacred than the Pentateuch. The word means "instruction" or "to learn." The Pentateuch is called the "Torah," the Hebrew word for "Law" or "a collection of laws." Another form of the Talmud was compiled in Babylon about a hundred years later than the Palestine Talmud.

A strict Jew has the witness to his religion on the doorpost of his house, and sometimes on the door of every room in it. A little wooden or metal tube with a small opening in it, is nailed on the right hand side. It contains a tiny roll of parchment with some verses from the book of Deuteronomy written on it, and the word "Shaddai," "the Almighty," on the back, which shows through the opening in the case. The Jews believe that evil spirits flee away from the Name of God, and this case is a safeguard to their houses. When they pass it, they touch it and kiss their fingers.

There is another very curious custom in Jewish houses, which comes from an old legend in the Talmud. The legend says that Adam had a wife before Eve was created, named Lilith, who hated all the human beings who were descended from Eve, and who was the mother of the devils. The word "Lilith"

is mentioned in the Book of Isaiah, where it is translated " screech-owl " in the Authorised Version and " night-monster " in the Revised Version. To protect new-born babies from Lilith the Jews hang charms with Hebrew Psalm verses on them on the walls.

In all their houses there are special candlesticks for the candles that every Jewish woman lights at sunset on Friday evening when the Sabbath begins. She covers her face with her hands and says a thanksgiving to God when they begin to burn. These candles are made to last for twenty-four hours, and must burn themselves out, because no Jew may either light or extinguish fire on the Sabbath.

There are also plaited tapers which are lighted at the end of the Sabbath, and boxes of spices, and special cups to hold the wine that is used at festival times.

If you went into the kitchen in the house of a strict Jew, you would see cupboards or dressers with double sets of crockery which are *never* mixed together, or even allowed to touch each other, or be washed in the same water. There are double sets of knives and spoons and forks too. One set is used for dishes with meat in them, and the other for any dishes containing milk or butter. Stored away in other places, there are special sets of crockery and cutlery which are used during

the Passover week, when only unleavened bread may be used.

Very religious Jews are most strict in their observance of the Sabbath, which they call the " Bride." No work whatever may be done from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday, not even cooking. Special clothes are worn, and special food is eaten ; no money may be spent and no musical instrument may be played, though games like chess are not forbidden.

There are always two twisted loaves sprinkled with poppy-seed in memory of the manna in the wilderness, and all food, even tea, is prepared beforehand. All Jews, whether they are strictly religious or not, are very careful indeed about the meat they eat, not only on the Sabbaths but at all times. It must be bought from a Jewish butcher who has a license from the Rabbi, or minister of the synagogue, killed with special knives and stamped with a Rabbi's seal to prove that it is " kosher " or " clean " meat.

There are about thirteen days in the year which are observed as Festivals and Fasts. The most important are the Passover, Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of the Dedication, Purim, in remembrance of the deliverance of the Jews recorded in the Book of Esther, and the Day of Atonement.

The Passover lamb is not now killed at the

feast anywhere except by the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim (see Chapters vii and xvi), but the bitter herbs, and the "sop," and the four cups of wine still form part of the meal, as they did in Bible times.

In some countries, very strict Jews still leave their houses for seven days at the Feast of Tabernacles, and live in a kind of summer-house made of wood and thatched, with fruit hanging from the roof, in memory of the time when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness. The Day of Atonement comes just before this feast, when no food whatever may be eaten by anyone above the age of thirteen, and the whole day is spent in solemn penitential services in the synagogue.

At the feast of the Dedication, which has been kept by the Jews ever since Judas Maccabeus restored the Temple to God's Service after the Syrian king Antiochus had defiled it (see Chapter ix), a fresh candle is lighted each evening during the octave, and special hymns of thanksgiving and praise are sung both in the synagogues and at home, when the eight are burning on the last night.

The whole Book of Esther is read in the synagogue on the Feast of Purim which falls in the middle of March, and every time the name of Haman is mentioned, the Jews stamp their feet and whirl wooden rattles. Three-

cornered cakes filled with honey and poppy-seed are eaten in the houses, and the rattles are used there too.

Jewish weddings generally take place in a synagogue. The bride and bridegroom stand before the chest in which the rolls of the Law are kept, with a canopy like a large shawl covering them both. The Rabbi blesses them, and gives them a cup of wine. When the ring has been placed on the bride's finger, the marriage contract is read in Aramaic, and the ceremony ends with another blessed cup of wine and the benediction.

Circumcision is still practised by the Jews, and if a boy is the first-born son, he is "redeemed" from the special consecration to God's service by the payment of five silver coins, worth about fifteen shillings, just as our Blessed Lord was redeemed when His Mother and S. Joseph did for Him "after the custom of the Law."

When a boy reaches his thirteenth birthday, he is regarded as being grown up and on the first Sabbath after it, he is made a "Son of the Commandment." He has to sing some of the Law in the synagogue, and at home he has to make a speech which he has learned by heart from the Talmud.

From the time when he is made a Son of the Commandment, the Jewish boy begins to wear the "phylacteries" when he says his

daily prayers, and the " talith " or " praying-robe " with its sacred tassels. The phylacteries are small square cases made of black leather, which must be the skin of a "kosher " animal, with long straps attached to them. One is worn across the forehead, and the other inside the left arm above the elbow, so that the case rests on the heart. There are small pieces of parchment inside them, which must also be made from " kosher " skin, on which the verses in the Bible in which Jews were commanded to wear phylacteries are written, with a special kind of reed pen, and on a certain number of lines. They are believed to be safeguards from evil spirits, as well as memorials of the Exodus, especially if the verses are written by a holy Rabbi.

The " talith " is worn over the head during prayer, and is a memorial of the Ten Commandments. Women never wear either phylacteries or taliths, and there is no growing-up ceremony for girls as there is for boys.

More than half the Jews in the world speak a curious language called " Yiddish," which means " Jewish." It is very like German and was the language spoken by German Jews in the middle ages, spreading from them to the colonies of Jews in all other lands. The Pentateuch has been translated

into Yiddish, for Jews who are not familiar with Hebrew. In the streets in London where Jews have settled, the notices in the shops are in Yiddish, and there are theatres where the plays are in that language and newspapers are published in it.

When there is serious illness in a Jewish household, the friends of the invalid use the Psalms as prayers of intercession. You know that, in the Bible version, the 119th Psalm is divided into twenty-two parts, each part having one of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet above it. The verses are chosen from the parts called by the letters of the sick person's name, as the Jews believe that such a prayer has great power. They tear their clothes, as a sign of grief, when the spirit has left the body, and do no work for seven days. A "talith" is wrapped round the dead body when it is buried.

We have already thought how the Jews are gradually returning to Palestine (see Chapter xi) and how the "Zionist" Movement is helping them to settle in colonies in the land that was once their own. Wherever they are, the love of the land of Israel and especially of Jerusalem, is a part of their life and religion.

When a Jew is married, he crushes a glass under his feet as a sign of grief for the loss of the Holy City; he leaves a piece of wall in his house unpapered for the same reason.

During the first nine days of August, except on the Sabbath, he mourns for Jerusalem, never touches meat, and reads the same Lamentations which the Jews in Jerusalem wail before the ancient Temple wall (see Chapter viii).

They have a picture in their houses called the "Misrach," which means "East," and reminds them of Mount Zion, when they say their prayers. The hope of return to the land of their forefathers is always in the heart of a true Jew, and friends greeting each other on their festival days, say: "This year in captivity; next year in Jerusalem."

CHAPTER XXIII

The Holy Places

THERE are, of course, numbers of places in the Holy Land which must be specially interesting to Christian people because at some time or other in His Life on earth, our Lord is known to have visited them. He lived in Galilee for more than thirty years; there must have been few districts where He did not go during that long period, for Galilee is less than sixty miles from north to south, and only thirty miles from east to west. During the last three years of His Life we know that He was incessantly walking about the country, going nearly to Tyre and Sidon in the north; to Jerusalem and Jericho in the south; and across the Jordan to the east. There is no record of His visiting the coast of the Mediterranean; the greater part of His ministry was in Galilee, on the hill-ranges in the centre of the country, and in the Jordan Valley.

Numbers of sites are shown to travellers in the Holy Land as places where events in the Gospels or in the Old Testament histories

took place, which must be entirely imaginary, or only traditional. The country itself, however, must be what it was at the time of our Lord's Life, and some places can have changed very little. He saw Hermon always in its snow-whiteness in the north; the Jordan rushed down the Ghór as it does now; the Sea of Galilee was the same; the plains and hills have not altered. There were silvery olive-orchards, shady fig-trees, and fruitful vines as there are now; spring covered the whole land with sheets of flowers as it does still; the camel caravans and the flocks of sheep and goats wandered about as they do now; there were both settled and nomadic tribes just as there are to-day.

We have thought already how the Christian Church from the earliest days has tried to find out and carefully guard the places that were sacred from their connection with our Lord. From the time when the Empress Helena tried to find the True Cross (see Chapter xii), the Church has regarded this as a sacred duty. As soon as the persecutions were over, Churches were built in Palestine, on purpose to preserve the holy places, and we have seen how marvellous their influence has been on the whole Christian world, from that day to this. It will then perhaps be interesting to have a chapter in this book about these holy places as they are now,

especially about the three most sacred of all, Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem.

Nazareth is a small town of white houses, surrounded by fifteen hills. It has very narrow streets, some of them just a footpath and a gutter, with a number of small shops. Most of the people are Greek and Roman Catholics, and a few Maronite Christians, and there are a good many Mohammedans, but scarcely any Jews at all.

There was a large Christian Church in Nazareth as early as the year 600 A.D. The Crusaders built Churches there, and in the time of the third Crusade, the English Bishop of Salisbury succeeded in persuading Saladin to allow the Christian services to continue in them. The ruins of the Crusader's Church are in the care of the Franciscan monks, who have had a Monastery at Nazareth since the year 1620.

In the large Church belonging to the monastery, there is an underground cave, richly decorated, with an Altar in it, over which is the Latin inscription, "HIC VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST"—"HERE THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH." It is said to stand on the spot where the Angel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin the approaching Incarnation, and she reverently and willingly consented to take her wonderful share in that greatest of all mysteries.

The synagogue where our Lord used to worship on Sabbath Days, and where He read the Lessons and preached, is said to have stood on a spot where the Greek Roman Catholics now have a building. The tradition goes back as far as the year 590.

By far the most interesting place in Nazareth is the village well. It is one of the few places where water is fresh and good, and can be drunk without first being boiled to kill malaria germs. There is no other spring in the place, so we may be quite sure that it was from this one that the Holy Family fetched the water they wanted for their home. The women of the village may always be seen with the pear-shaped water pots coming to fetch it, especially in the evenings. They can carry the pots on their heads, without touching them with their hands.

Other places which can only be traditions are shown, such as the workshop of S. Joseph, and the Kitchen of the Virgin, but the cliff from which the angry synagogue congregation tried to throw our Lord is still close by the town.

Nazareth is a beautiful little town with most wonderfully fresh air, and has many gardens and orchards. Lying in a hollow among the hills, it comes suddenly into sight, and only those who have perhaps heard the

single word " Nazareth ! " from their dragoman, as the road reaches the top of the hills, can tell how sacred and delightful it is to see it lying below them, for, although some of its sites are only imaginary,

> " Yet we believe Thy Footsteps trod
> Its streets and plains, Thou Son of God."

Bethlehem is about five miles from Jerusalem. In appearance it is very like a town on the Rhine banks, because it is on a hill, the sides of which are terraced for vineyards. It is a pastoral town now as it was when David kept sheep in its fields, when the shepherds of the Gospel watched their flocks, and nearly all its eight thousand people are Christians.

If you look at a photograph of Bethlehem, you will see a large and massive building, much more like a castle than a Church, in the middle of the flat-roofed houses. It is three large monasteries, Greek, Latin, and Armenian, all in one, with a great Church belonging to the three in common. The Church is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, but it is always known as the " Church of the Nativity," and ever since at least the year 330 A.D. it has been regarded as the most sacred site in the world, the spot where the Incarnation of the Son of God was completed. One of the first Christian writers,

who died in 166, says that our Lord was born in a cave at Bethlehem. The Bible says it was a stable belonging to the Bethlehem khan or inn, which quite probably was in a cave, for caverns in the hillsides were and still are used for all kinds of purposes in Palestine.

The traditional cave is in the crypt under the choir of the Church. It is lighted by many beautiful old lamps suspended from the roof by long chains. At the east end there is an Altar, in front of which a silver and jasper star is let into the pavement, with the inscription in Latin, " HERE JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY." Fifteen lamps belonging to the Greeks, Latins, and Armenians, hang over the Altar. In a little chapel close by, the Manger in which the Holy Child was laid is said to have been placed.

The tradition that our Lord was born in this cave is so ancient, and the Church has been there so long, that it is far more likely to be the true place than most of the holy places that are shown to travellers now. The thought of the millions of pilgrims who have been going there for at least fifteen hundred years, to worship the God Who they believed became a little Child in that cave is very wonderful, and surely hardly anyone can read that inscription round the star without a sense of love and awe.

The crypts under this noble old Church are a network of chapels, with winding passages in the rock leading from one to another. Most of them are connected with the events of the first Christmastide, and there is also a chapel and tomb where S. Jerome, the famous writer who translated the Bible into Latin, is commemorated. He lived for many years in the caves under the Church and died there in the year 420. His translation of the Scriptures, called the " Vulgate," is still the Bible used by the Roman Catholic Church.

The fields of Bethlehem must be much the same as they were in both Old and New Testament times. There are ruins of grottoes, cisterns, towers, and churches, in several places ; in olden days there was a Church dedicated to the " Gloria in Excelsis " in the fields, where that glorious carol was first sung to the frightened shepherds.

Bethlehem is one of the places where the olive wood boxes and rosaries, the mother-of-pearl crucifixes and baptismal shells, and the " stink-stone " vases, travellers so often bring home are made. There are many large shops in the square in front of the great Church.

Jerusalem is so full of sites connected with Bible history that it is impossible to think of many of them. We have already thought of the " Dome of the Rock " and the

Mosque El-Aksar on the flat hill-top where the Temple stood (see Chapter xii). The holy ground is entirely in Mohammedan hands, but it is still for Christians one of the most sacred parts of the City, for it is quite certain that our Blessed Lord was often there. The "Golden Gate" through which He rode on the first Palm Sunday, and through which six hundred years afterwards, Heraclius brought back the Cross that Chosroës had stolen (see Chapter xii) is walled up now, because Mohammedans always believed that some day they would lose Jerusalem again to a Christian conqueror, who would enter by that gate.

The Praetorium, or judgment-hall, where our Lord was condemned by Pilate, is believed to have been at a place just outside the walls of the Temple area, and there the famous street called the "Via Dolorosa," the "Way of Pain," begins. The Roman pavement can still be seen in the vaults under the Chapel in a Latin Sisterhood close by.

The Via Dolorosa leads by winding ways to the Holy Sepulchre Church. Fourteen "stations," marked by tablets on the walls, show the traditional sites of events, both Scriptural and legendary, on our Lord's road from the judgment hall to Calvary. The last five are in the Church itself.

Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine,

a famous Church historian, who died in 340 A.D., says that " contrary to all expectation," the Tomb of Christ was discovered in the reign of the Emperor Constantine, who built a Church over it, which was consecrated in 336, six years after the Church at Bethlehem was built. Ever since that time, the Christian world has believed that here our Blessed Lord's Death and Resurrection took place. Through the sixteen centuries, that have passed since then, the Church has been altered, added to, injured, and restored over and over again, but it has always remained in the same place, and has never had any but Christian services in it. You must not imagine a single Church when you think of this sacred building ; it is a mass of Churches, monasteries, courts, passages, and crypts, so numerous and so puzzling that a plan is necessary for finding your way about it.

The Greeks, Latins, Syrians, Armenians, Copts, and Abyssinian Christians all have their own special parts in the Church, but the principal holy sites, the Holy Sepulchre itself and Calvary, are common to all Christians.

There are two tiny Chapels, with very low doors, in the centre of the well-known *round* part of the Church. The first is called the " Chapel of the Apparition," and marks the place where the Resurrection Angel sat

waiting for the friends of our Lord on the first Easter Day. The Holy Sepulchre itself, covered with a split marble slab, is in the inner Chapel, which is so small that only four people can stand in it at once. The Holy Communion is celebrated there every morning, and a Greek priest stands always on guard by the Tomb. The marble is worn away in many places by the kisses of the pilgrims who have worshipped there through these long centuries.

The site of the Crucifixion is fourteen feet above the other parts of the Church, and is reached by a staircase. A cleft in the rock, tradition says, was caused by the earthquake on the first Good Friday. There are many chapels and recesses commemorating the different events of that awful day round the spot where the Cross is said to have stood. The Chapel of Abraham, in which the Greek Patriarch allows English clergy to celebrate the Holy Eucharist, is on Calvary, not far from the traditional site of the Crucifixion. It is a wonderful and sacred thing to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord on that hallowed ground, where, though much that is shown must be legendary,

> "Yet we believe that deed was done,
> Which shook the earth and veiled the sun."

The Church is always now called after the

Holy Sepulchre, but Constantine first built it to be the Church of the *Resurrection*, and that is its true dedication. The huge building not only bears witness that our Lord "was crucified, dead, and buried," but also that "the third day He rose again." Though we love and reverence the Sepulchre that has been held sacred all through these hundreds of years,

> "Yet we believe that angels said,
> 'Why seek the living with the dead?'"

It is impossible in this book to notice the many places in and near Jerusalem connected with the Passion of Christ. Somewhere on the Mount of Olives, perhaps in the spot where the Franciscans take care of the ancient olives (see Chapter xvii), the orchard of Gethsemane must have been. Bethany, a sad and desolate village, of about forty miserable dwellings in which only Mohammedans live, is about two miles from Jerusalem on the road to Jericho and the Dead Sea.

There is much that is superstitious, much that is imaginary, much that cannot possibly be true, in the history of the holy places of Palestine, but that need not trouble devout minds and loving hearts. The only thing that really matters is that in that little country the Son of God lived as Man. For

His Sake a marvellous wealth of love, and devotion, and self-sacrifice, has found its expression there: the very ruins all over the country are a witness to the power His Life has had through the centuries since He lived and died and rose again.

Let us, then, learn to know and love the Holy Land, even though we may never have the joy of standing on its soil. Let us read about it, think about it, ask questions about it, until it becomes familiar to us. Let us pray for its future settlement and prosperity.

Above all, let us take our share in work and prayer for the conversion of the ancient people of Palestine and of the Mohammedan population, to the Christian Faith. That Palestine should be in Christian hands, and under Christian government, would have seemed the wildest dream five or six years ago, yet it has come to pass. Let us pray that God will hasten the greater change; that all the different branches of the Catholic Church may be truly one, and all outside her gathered in, to His honour and glory, Who lived and died and rose again in the Land of the Incarnation.

Index

	PAGES
Aaron	33, 35
"Abbasid" Caliphs	154
Abd Khiba, King of "Urusalim"	24
Abd el-Malek	154
Abimelech	42
Abraham	18, 21, 195
Abraham, Chapel of	261
Absalom	54
Acacia Trees	215
Acre	110, 169, 174
Ælia Capitolina	140
Ahab, King of Israel	68
Ahaz, King of Judah	72, 79
Ahaziah, King of Judah	78
Allenby, General	120, 176, 177
Alexander the Great	9, 99
Alexander Jannaeus	112, 113
Alexandra, Queen	112, 114
Alexandria, Library at	101
Almeric, King of Jerusalem	162
Amalekites, The	49
Amaziah, King of Judah	77
Amenhotep III.	22
Amenhotep IV.	23
Amon, King of Judah	85
Ammonites, The	43, 96
Amorites, The	19, 24, 34
Amos, The Prophet	71, 209
Amraphel	19
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle	27, 99
Animals, Pre-historic	241
"Anno Domini"	121
Annunciation, Church of the	279
Antiochus, Epiphanes	103
Antipater	114
Ants	238
Apocrypha, The	98

PAGES

Arabia 34
Arabic Language 90, 196
Arabs 96, 195
Aramaic Language 195
Archelaus 123
Aristobulus I. 112
Aristobulus II. 113, 114
Ark, The 45, 55
Armenian Church, The 263
Armenians 200
Artaxerxes 96
Asa, King of Judah 76
"Asherim" 29, 76, 85
"Ashkenazim" 199
Assyria 14, 17
Athaliah, Queen of Judah 77
Atonement, Day of 271
"Attar of Roses" 217
Azariah, King of Judah 79

Baal 77
Baasha, King of Israel 67
Babylon 14, 17, 18, 89, 90
Baldwin I., King of Jerusalem 160
Baldwin II. 160
Baldwin III. 161
Baldwin IV. 163
Baldwin V. 163
"Balistas" 134
Bar-Cochba 139
Bats 227
Bazaars 248
Beds 244
Bedouins 182, 195
Beersheba 146, 176
Bees 239
Behistun, Inscription at 93
Beiram, Great and Lesser Feasts of 257
Bethlehem 45, 50, 57, 121-122, 185, 187, 281-283

PAGES

Bethlehem, Well of 57–8
Beth-zur, Battle of 108, 111
Bible, The 193
Bishop in Jerusalem, The Anglican 260
Boars, Wild 223
" Book of the Dead " 16
Bread... 245
British Army in Palestine 175–178
Bul-buls 229
Burning-Bush, The 31

Cæsar, Augustus 116
Cæsarea 120
Cæsarea Philippi 188
Cairo 172
Calvary 284–6
Camels 219
Camp of Israel 33
Canaanites 19
Caravans 179
Carmel, Mount 38, 182
" Catapults " 134
Cartouche 26
Cathedral, S. George's Anglican 177, 265
Cedars 59, 206
Chameleon 232
Charms 247, 270
Chosroës II. 146–148
Chronicles, Books of 80, 95
Church, The Christian 141
Circumcision 29, 273
Climate of Palestine 9, 181, 205–6
Cochineal Insect 239
Colocinths 215
Coins 138, 148
Commandments, Ten 33
" Commandment, Son of the " 273
Conies 225
Constantine, Emperor 143, 144

PAGES

Constantinople 146
Copts 200
Coptic, Church 264
Cormorants 230
Coronation Service 48, 57
Cranes 230
Creation, The 13, 18, 240
Crocodiles 231
Crusade, First 158–161
Crusade, Second 162–165
Crusade, Third 165
Crusade, Fourth 165
Crusade, Fifth 165
Crusade, Sixth 166
Crusade, Seventh 166–167
Crusade, Eighth 167–168
Crusade, Ninth 168
Crusades, List of the 169
Crusade, Childrens' 169
Cuneiform Writing 17, 93
Cyrus, King of Elam and Babylon 90
Cyrus, Cylinder of 91

Dagon 38, 46, 235
Damascus 86, 175, 178, 179
Daniel, Book of 105
Darius 92, 93, 99
David 50–57
Dead Sea, The 37, 191
Deborah 40, 184
Dedication, Feast of the 108, 271
"Deluge" Tablets 18
Dervishes 256
Destruction of Jerusalem 130–140
Deuteronomy, Book of 86, 268
"Dispersion," The 117, 142
Dogs 222
"Dome of the Rock" 92, 152, 153
Donkeys 220

PAGES

Door-posts 268
Doves 229
Dress 201, 246–7
Druses, The 175, 198, 201

Ebal, Mount 185
Eden, Garden of 241
Edomites, The 34
Egypt 14, 17, 21–26
El-Aksar, Mosque of 152, 165
Elephantine, Papyri in 95
Elephants 109
Eli 45
Elijah 70
Elisha 70
Esdraelon, Plain of 185
Esther, Book of 271
Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea 143
Excavations 12
Exodus, The 27–36
Exodus, Book of 27
Ezekiel 86, 89
Ezra 95
Ezra, Book of 95

Felix 126, 129
"Fellahîn" 196
Festus 126, 129
Fig-trees 206
First-born, Redemption of 273
Fish 189, 233–4
Fish Mummies 235
Flax 212
Fleas 239
Flies 239
Flints 12
Florus 127, 129
Flowers 183, 215–217
Foxes 225
Francis of Assisi, S. 171

PAGES

Franciscans, The 171, 201, 263
Franks, The 170, 199
Frogs 233
Frederick II., Emperor of Germany 166
Fulk, King of Jerusalem 161
Funerals 258–9, 275
Furniture 244

Gadites, The 35, 192
Galilee 185
Galilee, Sea of 189
Gaza 44, 111, 173, 176
Gazelles 226
Genesis, Book of 13, 16
Geoffrey, The Chronicler 10
George, S. 159
Gerizim, Mount 186, 272
Gethsemane, Garden of 287
Gezer 12, 20, 29, 58, 110, 220
"Ghetto," The 141
"Ghôr," The 190
Gideon 41, 42, 184
Gipsies 200
Glass, Blue 247
Goats 220
Godfrey of Bouillon 159–160
"Golden Gate," The 172
Goliath 51
Gongs 262
Grass 215
Greek Church, The... ... ... 201, 259–262
Greek Church Services 261
Greek Language 102
Guy of Lusignan 163

Hadrian 140
Haggai 89, 92
Haifa 179, 182
Hand-mills 245
"Harem," The 257

PAGES

Harun al-Rashid 154
Hattîn, Battle of 164
Harvest 206, 252
Hawks 227
Head-dresses 246
Hebrew Language 195
Hebron 19, 21, 53, 185
Helena, The Empress 144
Henna 246
"Hejira," The 150
Heraclius 146–148
Hermon, Mount 184
Herod, Agrippa 126
Herod Antipas 122
Herod the Great 116
Hezekiah, King of Judah ... 80, 82,–85
"High Places" 29, 66, 84
Hiram, King of Tyre 55
Hittites, The 20, 21
"Holy Fire," The 262
Holy Days 255
Holy Places, The 277–287
Hor, Mount 35
Hornets 239
Horses 220
Hosea 71
Hoshea, King of Israel 72
Hospitality 250
"Hospitallers," The 161
Houses 243
Huleh, Lake... ... ... 22, 188
Hyænas 223
Hyrcanus, John I. 112
Hyrcanus, John II. 113
Hyssop 63, 214

INCARNATION, The 121, 127
"Invention of the Cross," The 144
Isaiah 80

PAGES

Isaiah," The " Second 90
Isaiah, Book of 80, 96
Israel, Kingdom of 65–75
Islam 255–259

Jabbok, River 190
Jackals 224
Jacob 22
Jacobite Church, The 264
Jaffa 61, 173, 176, 183
JAHWEH 30
James the Great, S. 126
Jason, High-Priest 103
Jebel Udsum, Mount 191
Jebusites 53
Jehoachin, King of Judah 86
Jehoahaz, King of Judah 86
Jehoakin, King of Judah 86
Jehoash, King of Israel 67
Jehoram, King of Judah 77
Jehoram, King of Israel 77
Jehoshaphat, King of Judah 76
Jehu, King of Israel 70
Jephthah 43
Jeremiah 86, 88
Jericho 37, 38
Jeroboam I., King of Israel 63–66
Jeroboam II., King of Israel 71
Jerboas 226
Jerome, S. 143, 266, 283
Jerusalem ... 7, 24, 39, 53, 87, 130–140, 142, 151, 172, 176, 185, 187, 283–287
Jezebel, Queen of Israel 70
" Jews," Origin of name 90
Joab 53
Joash, King of Judah 77
John the Baptist, S. 123, 186
John the Evangelist, S. 141
John of Giscala 131, 134, 137

PAGES

Joinville, John de 10, 167
Jonathan 49, 50
Jordan, River 37
Jordan, Ford of 37
Jordan, Valley of 182, 188–192
Joseph 22
Josephus 99, 127, 131–134, 138, 211
Joshua 36–39
Joshua, High-Priest 91
Josiah, King of Judah 85, 86
Jotapata 131–133
Jotham 42
Jotham, King of Israel 79
Judaea, Hill Country of 187
Judah, Kingdom of 76–88
Judges, Book of 40
Juniper Trees 213

Kenites, The 30
Kedron, The Book 186
Khammurabi 19
Khans 251
Kharezmians 167
"Khatîb," The 256
Kings, Books of 73, 80, 81
Kings of Israel and Judah, List of 67
"Koran," The 150, 255
"Kosh," The 244
"Kosher" meat 271

Lachish 12, 25, 79, 183
Lamentations, Book of 89, 276
"Lämmer-geier" 227
Lamps 244
Latin Church 263
Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem 160–1
Latin Kings of Jerusalem, List of 170
Lebanon 59, 186
Lebanon, Cedars of 59
"Leben" 254

PAGES

Leontopolis, Temple at 103
Leopards 225
Lepers 254
Levi, Tribe of 39
Levites 95
Leviticus, Book of 227
"Lilith" charms 269
Lions 218
Lizards 231
Locusts 236–7
Locust-tree, The 211
Louis, S. 167–168
Lysias 107–8

Maccabees, Books of 98, 105
Maccabeus, John 106–111
Maccabeus, Simon 106–111
Maccabeus, Judas 9, 106–111
Maccabeus, Eleazar 106–111
Maccabeus, Jonathan 106–111
Magi, The 122
Mamelukes 172
Manasseh, Tribe of... 35
Manasseh, King of Judah 85
Mandeville, Sir John 11, 189
"Maritime Plain," The 182
Mandrakes 213
Maronites, The 175, 198
Marriage 257, 273
Marriage Customs 257, 273
Mattaniah, King of Judah 67, 87
Mattathias 105
Meals 245
Mecca 149
Medina 149
Megiddo 71
Menelaus 104
Menaham, King of Israel 72
Meneptah, King of Egypt 26

PAGES

Merodach-Baladan 82
Mesha, King of Moab 69, 70, 221
Mesopotamia 17
Messiah, The 118
Midianites, The 41
"Misrach," The 276
Moabites, The 24, 34
"Moabite Stone," The 69
Modin 105, 110
Mohammed 148–150
Mohammed Ali 174
Money 249
Mosaic at Beersheba 146
Moses 29–36
Mosques 145, 203
Mosquitoes 177, 240
Mummies 26
"Murashû Sons" 97
Museum, British ... 11, 15, 18, 22, 70, 83, 195
Museum, Cairo 26
Museum, Constantinople 122
Museum, The Louvre 69, 122
Musical Instruments 251
Mustard 213

Napoleon I. 9, 173, 174, 184
Nathan 55
"Nativity, Church of the" ... 155, 265, 281
Nazareth 154, 178, 279–281
Nebuchadrezzar 86
Necho, King of Egypt 86
"Negeb," The 185
Nehemiah 96
Nehemiah, Book of 95
Nero 130, 134
Nettles 214
Nicæa, Council of 143
Nile, The 26
Nineveh 18, 73

PAGES

Nippur 94
Nur-ed-Dîn 162
Oaks 19, 209
Offence," " Mount of 63
Og, King of Bashan 35
Olives, Mount of 63, 185
Olive Trees 206
Olive-gathering 206, 253
Omar, Caliph 148–152
" Omayyad " Caliphs, The 154
Omri, King of Israel 68
Onias 114
" Ostraka " 68, 95
Owls 228

Palestine Exploration Fund 11, 20, 110
Palestine 176, 180
Palms 210
Papyrus 22, 253
Partridges 236
Passover, The 186, 271
Patriarch of Jerusalem 260
Pekah, King of Israel 72
Pekahiah, King of Israel 72
Pelicans 230
Pentateuch, The 75
Pentecost, Feast of 271
Peter the Hermit 158
Persians, The 98
Pharisees, The 112
Pharaohs, The 23–26
Philip, Governor of Jerusalem 104
Philip the Tetrarch 123
Philistines, The 38, 45
Phoenicians, The 38
Phylacteries 273
Pigeons 229
Pigs 222
Pilgrimages 143, 194, 266

PAGES

Pilgrimage to Mecca 191
Pilgrimage to Jordan 256
Pithom 28
Pompey 115
Pontius Pilate 124, 125
Porcupines 226
Pottery 13
Praetorium, The 124
Proverbs 251
Proverbs, Book of 64
Procurators, List of 129
Psalms 56, 105, 145
Psalter, The 56
Ptolemy I. 101
" Purim," Feast of 271
" Purple " colour 234

Quails 230

Rains 205
Rainald of Chatillon 163–164
Ramadân, Fast of 255
Ramesses the Great 25
Ramesses, treasure-city 28
Ravens 229
Recreations 251
Red Sea, The 31
Rehoboam, King of Judah 65
Religion of Abraham 29
Religion of Israel 29
Reubenites, The 35, 192
Resurrection of Christ, The 284
Richard I. of England 10, 165
" Rob Roy " 189, 231
Roman Conquest 112
" Rose of Jericho " 191
Ruth, Book of 45

Sabbath, The 33, 271
Sabbath Lights 270
Sadducees 113

PAGE

Saladin 9, 162–165, 184
Samaria 68, 73, 74, 92, 169, 184
Samaritans, The 73, 74, 92, 96, 186, 272
Samson 44
Samuel 45–49
Samuel, Books of 47, 57
Sanhedrin, The 113
Sargon, King of Assyria 73, 80, 81, 92
Saul 47, 184
Sayce, Professor 84
Scarabs 21
Scorpions 235
Seals 71, 97
Sebasté 120
Seljuks, The 155
Sennacherib, King of Assyria 81
Sennacherib, Cylinder of 82
Sennacherib, Will of 83
"Sephardim," The 142, 199
Sepphoris 131
Sepulchre of Christ, The 124, 235–6
Sepulchre, Church of the Holy 144, 155, 165,260, 265, 284–287
Septuagint, The 102, 117
Shallum, King of Israel 72
Shalmaneser, King of Assyria 70, 72, 81
Shalmaneser, Black Obelisk of 70
Sharon, Plain of 181
Sheba, Queen of 61, 148
Shechem 42, 186
Sheep 221
Shema, Seal of 71
"Shephelah," The 183
"Shibboleth" 44
Shiloh 45
Shishak, King of Egypt 63, 66, 203
Shops 248
Sidon 38
Siloam 96, 203

PAGES

Siloam Inscription 83, 84
Sinai, Mount 31, 33
Snakes 232
Solomon 58–64
Solomon's Stables 62, 227
Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem 151
Sparrows 229
Spiders 235
Steles 19
Stone Age, The 12
Storks 230
Suleiman the Magnificent 172
Sybilla, Queen of Jerusalem 163
Sycamores 209
Synagogues 145
Synagogue at Capernaum 145
Synagogue at Nazareth 280
Syria 71

Tabernacle, The 33
Tabernacles, Feast of 97, 271
Tahutmes III. 22, 26, 203
"Talith," The 274
"Talmud," The 139, 268
Teie, Queen of Egypt 25
Tel el-Amarna Letters 23, 38
Tels 12
Templars, The 161
Temple, Solomon's 59–62, 136
Temple, The Second 92, 93, 94
Temple, Herod's 118, 119
Temple notice-stele... 122
Tents 195
"Teraphim" 30
Terebinth Trees 211
Tetrarchs 123
Thorns 212
Tiberias 125, 131, 139
Tiberius Cæsar 125
Tiglath-Pileser 72, 73

PAGES

Time, Way of telling 249
Titus 130
Titus, Arch of 138
Titus, Triumph of 138
"Torah," The 268
Tortoises 231
Turks, The 206
Tyre 38, 234

Unicorns 218
Ur of the Chaldees 18, 29
Urban, Pope 158
Usher, Archbishop 13

Vespasian 9, 130
"Via Dolorosa," The 284
Vines 206
Vineyards 208
Vintage, The 208, 253
"Vulgate," The 283
Vultures 227

"Wadys" 32
Wailing-place, The Jews' 89, 119, 276
Water-pots 244
Well at Nazareth, The 281
"Welys" 211
Wine-jars 68
Wolves 224
Women's work 254

Yarmuk, River 190
"Yiddish" Language 274

Zadok 56, 113
"Zealots," The 126
Zechariah, King of Israel 72
Zechariah, The Prophet 89, 92
Zedekiah, King of Judah 87
Zerubbabel 91
Zeus 104
Zion, Mount 56
"Zionist Movement," The 142, 275
Zowân 213, 245

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